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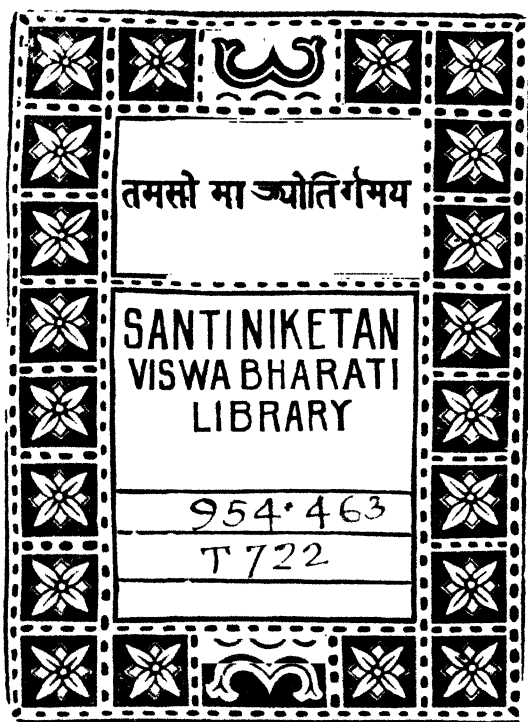
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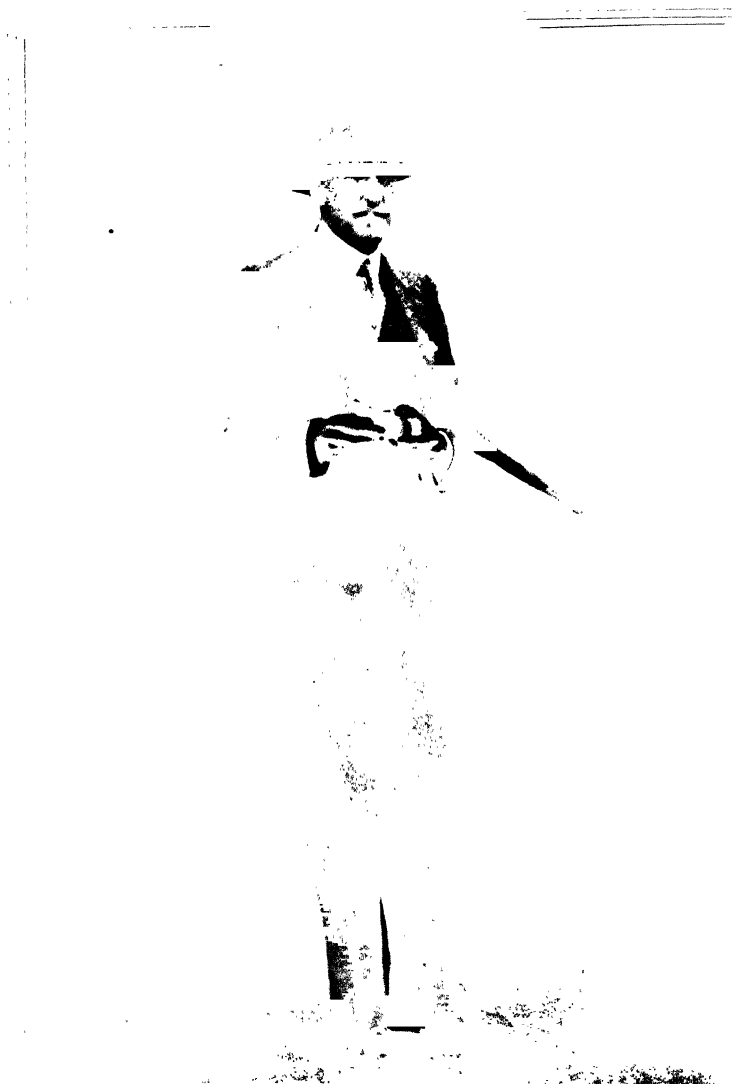
Bombay, June, 1936.





# LORD WILLINGDON IN INDIA





*His Excellency Lord Willingdon  
photographed during his visit to  
Bombay in 1933*

# LORD WILLINGDON IN INDIA

BY  
"VICTOR TRENCH"

1934

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Against the background of the social and political upheavals in India during the last twenty years, the author, with a wealth of documental references, unfolds the personality of Lord Willingdon and his all-pervading influence on national life. It was a task that required to be done, for the history of British rule in India provides no example of anyone holding such key positions for such a length of time. And Lord Willingdon held them during the Empire's most anxious periods.

A calm and dispassionate spectator of the panorama unreeled during the last two decades, the author presents here a vivid analysis of the complex socio-economic forces at work and brings to bear on the subject a sympathetic attitude that is at once pleasing and instructive. Policies and actions, whether of Lord Willingdon or of the leaders of the Indian national movement, are interpreted here with courageous candour and in a style that rushes the reader down the three hundred pages with amazing swiftness.

No work on Lord Willingdon's Indian career can be adequate without reference to the dynamic personality of Lady Willingdon who, it may be stated without exaggeration, is chiefly responsible for the brilliance of his colonial career. Though a separate chapter is devoted to Lady Willingdon's work it must be emphasised here that hers was the dominat-

ing influence behind the multifarious movements of social regeneration and nation-building dealt with right through the book. If ever there was a power behind a throne, Lady Willingdon surely has been, specially in the field of social movements. The stamp of her personal endeavour will for ever remain on the non-official up-lift activities in Bombay, Madras and Delhi. The author who has assumed the present name to avoid personal publicity has had exceptional opportunities to witness Indian movements at close quarters, and this fact coupled with a detailed study of the subject has enabled him to handle it with notable achievement.

## INTRODUCTION

Freeman Freeman-Thomas, Earl of Willingdon, G.M.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.M.I.E., G.B.E., P.C., etc., Viceroy and Governor-General of India, son of Frederick Freeman-Thomas and Mabel, daughter of the first Viscount of Hampden, was born on 12th September 1866. After education at Eton and Cambridge, where he achieved noteworthy successes and captained the cricket elevens, he married in 1892, Hon. Marie Adelaide, daughter of the first Earl of Brassey. On Lord Brassey being appointed Governor of Victoria, Lord Willingdon went to Australia as his A. D. C. in 1895 and thus entered on what was to be a long career in Britain's colonial empire. On the termination of Lord Brassey's Governorship of Victoria he returned to England and successfully offered himself as a Liberal candidate for Hastings which he represented from 1900 to 1906, and for the next four years represented the Bodmin Division of Cornwall. He was Junior Lord of the Treasury from 1905 to 1912 and took an important part in the consolidation of the Liberal Party then in the ascendant. In 1913 he was appointed Governor of Bombay where his popularity throughout the strenuous period of the War found expression in the Presidency-wide movement led by that great leader of the Maratha ruling Houses His Highness the late Chhatrapati Maharaj of Kolhapur for the extension of his term of office. After the termination of the exten-

sion he returned to India as the head of the Senior Presidency (1919-24) where he worked the Montagu Reforms during the post-war period. Lord Willingdon represented India at the Assembly of the League of Nations in 1924 and was Chairman of the Delegation from the Boxer Indemnity Committee which visited China at the time of the revolutionary chaos in January-July 1926. On his successful return, he was appointed Governor-General of Canada (1926-31) and immediately after came here as Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

The present work, confining itself to Lord Willingdon's career in India, traverses a period of Indian history most exciting in its swift succession of events, and among the personalities standing out against the background of the social and political upsurges during the last twenty years is that of the present Viceroy. He headed the Bombay Presidency during the perilous period of the War and helped in shaping the Montagu Reforms; he faced the post-war movement of non-co-operation in Madras and justified his Liberalism through the successful working of the new constitution; he was appointed to the Viceroyalty of India to confront a more acute politico-economic crisis and the ever-increasing complications of further constitutional advance. The abandonment, if only for the time being, of direct action by the Congress and its entry into the Assembly sanctioned at the Bombay plenary session constitute, in effect, the fulfilment of Lord Willingdon's policy. In the background of his career stands the distinguished figure of Lady Willingdon whose ever-widen-

ing activities, charm of manner and incomparable strength of character have been a matter of admiration these twenty years. We need not go into details here. The record of work referred to in the following pages is the inseparably combined achievement of Lord and Lady Willingdon.

In dealing with their endeavours and accomplishments in the field of social reform, education, industry, agriculture, co-operative movement, local self-government, etc., etc., the author has referred to various works and publications, reference books, Government reports and daily journals, and this book cannot go out without his grateful acknowledgment and thanks to them.

The publication of this book would have been impossible without the generosity of a gentleman, a great Indian statesman, whose admiration for the personality of Lord Willingdon evoked help.

Among others whom I must thank here the foremost is Mr. E. A. Samuel who first suggested to me to undertake the work and from time to time helped and encouraged me.

To Mr. B. G. Horniman, the Editor of the *Bombay Chronicle* last year and of the *Bombay Sentinel* now, who rendered me invaluable help in the present work, I record my deepest and most abiding gratefulness.

Next, I have to thank that very affable leader in the world of education in Bombay, Professor V. G. Rao of the Elphinstone College, who was a tutor to Lord Ratendone when his father was Governor of Bombay. Prof. Rao very kindly wrote for me an



appreciation of Lord Ratendone which he, as few others, is so competent to do. I am extremely thankful to him for this and for the suggestions he made to me from time to time.

I offer my grateful thanks to Mr. Francis Low, the Editor of the *Times of India*, for placing at my disposal the files of his journal and for the other facilities he gave me, and Mr. H. G. Fells for the very useful suggestions he made for improving the work. Then I must acknowledge with thanks the kindness of the Keeper of the Record Office and the staff of the Office of the Director of Information for supplying me with the records and books I required. My thanks are due to the Karnatak Printing Press for the printing and get-up in which this book issues forth and to Mr. G. R. Mallapur for the very diligent supervision kept over the printing. Lastly, mention must be made of Mr. Moses Joseph, the star of stenographers of India, who did all the stenotyping, and who, with such selfless devotion, helped in the correction of proofs after a day's hard toil.

BOMBAY :  
13th December 1934. †

“VICTOR TRENCH”

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## PROLOGUE

**I**NDIA constitutes one-twelfth of the civilised land surface of the globe and a sixth of its population; it is a fourth of the British Empire and comprises half its subjects. Each of the major Indian provinces covers an area larger than some of the big European nations. The ruler of Bombay governs an area one and a half times the size of Italy and four times the population of Norway. The Governor of Madras controls the destiny of a province five times the size of Portugal and seven times its population. Junior members of the Indian Civil Service rule supreme over administrative districts many of which are larger than some of the independent European nationalities. Within the borders of the land there are more potentates than in the rest of the world put together, they exercise greater internal power than any monarch living outside. Its 700 States include those like Hyderabad, Kashmir and Mysore, each of which can accommodate within its bowels half a dozen baby nations of Europe born of the Great War.

India's imperial importance transcends the vastness of its area and the immensity of its population.

India was the home of a glorious civilisation while the nations of the West were still groping in the wilderness of barbarism. From the zenith of the Maurya civilisation, more than two thousand years before Christ, down to the eighteenth century, there were monarchs ruling in the land, the brilliance and power of whose courts challenged comparison with, and often surpassed, those of their contemporaries. Reputation of its wealth and glory excited the enterprise of successive invaders from the hilly tracts of the north down the fertile plains of the Punjab, and history proceeded in India, as in most other lands, in a series of cataclysmic upheavals, each invader importing fresh influences and institutions, destroying much that was built before and absorbing little of the previous regime. Throughout its long history, therefore, the requisite conditions for the continuity of social development and organic growth of political life were denied to the land. With the downfall of the feudal Moghal and Maratha Empires in the eighteenth century, ensued a period of chaos and anarchy from which the country was rescued by the rapidly growing power of the East India Company. Modern commerce and industry cannot thrive, or continue to function, in a land wading through a sea of chaos, and the East India Company restored normal, peaceful activity wherever it spread its power, so that by the time of handing over its charge to the Crown, a uniform administrative system, codified law and its even operation, a clear conception of the duties,

functions and responsibilities of Government towards its subjects, had been factors of general prevalence throughout the land. For the first time in India, the essential conditions for a continuity of policy and a steady development of its political life had thus been provided for its people. A uniform system of Government in combination with the unifying influence of the railway and other transport systems, postal and telegraphic means of communication, the growth of Western education, machine-factory, trade and industry, fostered the urge of nationalism, challenging to-day the authority of its parentage.

The policy of gradual realisation of Dominion Self-Government in India, publicly announced in 1917, had its roots far back in the early days of the East India Company. Though predominantly a business organisation in its objective, the East India Company had on its shoulders administrative responsibilities which were fully realised by the towering parliamentarians of the period, not a few of the outstanding statesmen having made their reputation in championing Indian welfare. Within twenty years of Clive's consolidation of the gains of Plassey, the British Parliament, with the thunderclap of the American Revolution and the fatal consequences of Lord North's suicidal policy in the background, passed the first Regulation Act of 1773 for a stricter supervision over the administrative conduct of the Company, and ten years later, Pitt's India Bill made a definite advance over the previously sanctioned parliamentary control. The decennial inquiry preceding the renewal of the Royal Charter guaranteed the

well-being of the Company's subjects and provided a field for Liberal talents in a monumental service for purity and efficiency of Indian administration.

With the transfer of India to the Crown came the historic Proclamation of Queen Victoria and the Council Act of 1861. Between 1861 and 1892 the Government of India were engaged in effecting those changes for devolution of greater administrative powers to provinces, which, later, flowered into the demand for provincial autonomy. The Council Act of 1892 widened the scope of representation of Indians in the Government of their country, and the introduction of the Morley-Minto Reforms concluded the line of development by which the representatives of India were engaged as Government's advisers, as distinct from their direct control of the governmental machinery introduced at a later stage. Though a pronouncement of the highest moment, Montagu's declaration was not a departure from, but a fresh development of the previous policy. The summoning of the Round Table Conference, the scheme for provincial autonomy and the birth of federal concept and central responsibility, are the ripening fruits of a deliberate policy, stretching over a hundred and fifty years. Those who warn against the possible consequences of the development of democratic government in India would be well advised to realise the historic facts of British connection, for they will find no alternative to the present culmination of the influences, precepts and practices of a century and a half. There is no getting away from the fact that the urge of nationalism in India is true and genuine, and

has now transfused into the widest strata of society. Any reversal of the policy would mean a cataclysmic break from a past which the British themselves have made. It would mean a public declaration of bankruptcy of statesmanship, and British statesmanship, after three centuries of imperial experience, is anything but bankrupt to-day.

The ideals of Indian nationalism, as we have shown above, have their genesis in the influence of British supremacy. Having experienced the chaotic effects of the crumbling of the last solid structure of feudal society in the eighteenth and a considerable portion of the nineteenth century, for more than fifty years, India had a life of peace and contentment. Happy in the security of life and property provided by the new regime, it continued to think in terms of the transitoriness of the mortal world and the splendours of the next. Modern economic framework and productive system are, however, an extremely disturbing, ruthlessly changing, unremittingly advancing force. The impact of these forces, delayed in transit, was unmistakably being felt. It generated contradictory ideals and ambitions. One section, the most predominant at the time, wailed for the past, the other, with a grip on realities, tuned for the future. Top-hat and tail coat, Oxford accent and Government House manners, the latest political theories, social ideals and creeds became the fashion of the latter, the more rigorous adherence to obsolete practice, the more ready reference to holy lore and sanctified texts, became the baleful stars that steered the confused course of the former. The annual



Congress carnival was, however, for years confined to the top strata of the educated class. In the placid political atmosphere of the country came the Russo-Japanese War, and the victory of an Asiatic power—won largely because the British refused the Russian fleet the shortest course to the Pacific—stimulated Indian patriotism, which, by a strange logic, established connection between the interest of Indian nationalism and rising Japanese imperialism which could be, as much as Russia, a menace to Indian safety. The Bengal partition agitation, bringing forth in its train that giant wave of militant swadeshism which the factory magnates of Bombay welcomed with all eagerness, and providing a common cause to the extreme elements of both orthodox and educated classes, further disturbed the political barometer. The sentimental appeal of Japanese victory, however, subsided with the passage of time, and, when it was wisely discovered that the partition of Bengal was not exactly a settled fact, the political situation again became normal. The thundering wave of goodwill which swept over the country on the King's arrival washed away the last remnants of discontent in India. The Morley-Minto Reforms consolidated the harmonious relationship between the ruler and the ruled.

The problems of the Indian political situation confronting Empire statesmen to-day came to the surface and grew into maturity during the period exactly covered by Lord Willingdon's career in India. India at his advent in 1913 was a quiet country. There were minor problems of social constraint, there were

slender appeals for administrative changes, for more jobs for Indians and more scope for the play of national energy. But political consciousness was confined to the upper middle class town-dwellers, the broad masses remained unconcerned with the appeals of educated India expounded in the sonorous periods of a foreign language. The War set into motion a wave of loyalty, which carried on its crest and in its contents, politicians and priests, leaders of opinion and rulers of States, with ideals and objectives that at once presented a unique phenomenon and a baffling problem. The votary of unmitigated autocracy joined hands with the advocate of popular rule to help in a war fought under the inspiring slogan of the Defence of Democracy, the instigator of anarchist terrorism vied with the prophet of constitutional progress, and often outbade him, in the service of an empire he wished to destroy; the orthodoxy that considered transoceanic travel a crime, expunged only with the lavish expenditure of wealth, scrapped its texts to rush to the rescue of the hated civilisation; the very high-priests of non-violence became recruiting officers of the British Commonwealth and hoped thereby to win favours of the rulers. Though national loyalty remained unsullied throughout the war period, the urge of national enterprise grew with the growth of the war strain and developed with the inspiration of the war slogans. The Home Rule agitation embodied the spirit of the times and gave Lord Willingdon's administration, whose prime duty it was to concentrate on war efforts abroad and to maintain peace at home, moments of the deepest anxiety.

Then came Mr. Montagu's famous declaration and the reforms, which, for the first time under British rule, placed Indian ministers in administrative charge of vital nation-building departments. On the eve of the inauguration of the reforms, with Lord Willingdon in Madras, came the cyclone of the non-co-operative disturbances, unknown to the country for the previous seventy years. The right of Government was challenged, the authority of law put to the severest test. In the background of the upsurge were the experimental operations of the new constitution. After subsidy of the non-co-operation movement came wave after wave of industrial deadlocks, youth organisations and peasant conferences, spreading doctrines of violent annihilation. The Congress declared for isolation from the British Commonwealth of Nations and entered upon a second "holy" war against the Government. In the rear of the political war-front was the constructive side of Government policy tugging at perplexing constitutional problems round the renowned table at London. The Agreement between the King's supreme viceroy and the saintly leader of the non-violent war left the issue of sanction of direct action, as far as its psychological effect on the pro-Congress forces was concerned, undecided. After an interval during which both sides had declared for a general mobilisation of forces, the Congress made another bid for supremacy, the countryside was given over to a physico-spiritual combat, no-rent, no-tax campaigns harried the entire provinces of the Frontier, the Punjab, and the United Provinces and to a lesser degree Bombay, Madras

and the Central Provinces. Behind the scenes of these forces, again, were the unremitting endeavours of constructive statesmanship for the fruitful release of arrested indigenous energies.

Lord Willingdon's Indian career coincides with these dynamic episodes of Indian nationalism, and among the imposing galaxy of British statesmen and administrators, who bent their energies to the task of nation-building in India and in placing it on a sound road to social and economic progress, Lord Willingdon will occupy a place of rare distinction.

Lord Willingdon entered India at the most formative period of its national being, and he devoted the best part of his ripe experience to the service of Britain's greatest charge. He saw the growth of constitutional ambition and harnessed it for beneficial advance, he saw its militant and assertive youthfulness in the Home Rule movement, and by devolution of power to local bodies and elastic interpretation of provincial rights already conferred, gave it a constructive turn. He witnessed the surging wave of the non-co-operation movement and counteracted it by the most liberal translation of the Montagu reforms. He experienced, as the Governor-General and Viceroy of India, the more devastating chaos of economic depression and Civil Disobedience, its political expression, and applied the effective cement of a comprehensive programme of politico-economic action. Nation-building in India, as in other countries, involves a series of severely practical and extraordinarily unassuming range of activities. Education, public health, industrial development, agricultural im-

provement, irrigation, transport and co-operative movement, constitute the modest foundations of democratic nationalism, and involve a series of operations, not so fast and impressive as a freedom's call to arms against authority, but which are the real power-house of progress. To get the peasant freed from the clutches of the money-lender by co-operative effort and legal action may not be so inspiring as a bugle call, at times righteously sent, for the repudiation of debts, it is certainly a vital activity for the peaceful regeneration of the countryside.' The steady erection of a comprehensive educational system is less gripping than the public declaration of the sanctity of deserting Government-controlled schools and colleges, but in the absence of ideal national schools, it is decidedly the surer way of laying the basis of a truly democratic government.

In the following pages we shall see how Lord Willingdon concentrated on these nation-building activities, how education progressed under his administration in Bombay and Madras, irrigation schemes sanctioned and executed, agricultural improvement effected, requirements of public health steadily secured, co-operative movement flourished and industries developed. In the following pages we shall see the growth of local self-government, devolution of wider powers to municipalities, district bodies and taluka boards, extension of electoral principle, limitation of official control and transfer of greater responsibilities to popular shoulders. We shall see Lord Willingdon rallying the people of the Bombay Presidency for imperial defence, inspiring them with the spirit of the

righteousness of the cause and the guarantee of its victory. We shall see him face trade dislocation, panics in currency, run on banks, rise in prices, and, despite them, continue to evoke a most admirable co-operation of his subjects for the prosecution of the War. We shall see him heal the wounds of social isolation, fling the doors of Government House open for co-operation of responsible opinion, and, later, in the midst of the titanic struggle when he saw the alarming growth of political discontent, exercise the traditional principles of healthy liberalism, and refuse, as long as the movement pursued the path of constitutional devices, to summon the wide powers at his command for suppression of opinion. We shall see him discern the root cause of the discontent, address himself to the task of political advance and pursue it with a zest to win recognition of the people and admiration of the author of the reforms. We shall see him in Madras engaged in successful working of the reforms, whose advocacy he, perhaps more than any other provincial Governor, had championed while in Bombay. We find him following the strictest parliamentary practice and placing a most liberal interpretation on the new constitution, consistent therewith, summoning the leader of the majority party to form his own ministry, and establishing the elected representatives in real control of the destiny of their province. We shall see him engaged in executing far-reaching schemes for the expansion of transport facilities, development of Presidency ports, industry and agriculture; we shall see him support the rights of Indian labour in foreign lands with no less a vigour

than its rights in the country itself ; we shall see him sanction broad-based schemes for wiping out the slum-lands in the Southern Presidency and for the sanitary housing of the working class in consonance with the requirements of modern conditions ; we shall see him realise the woes of the peasantry and rush to their rescue in flood and famine ; we shall see him hold the balance justly and fairly between the tenant and the landlord, and succour the weak and the helpless. On the other hand we find him faced with the gigantic task of combating the forces of anarchy and reaction arising out of the war consequences, and facing them with a determination firmly to maintain the sanctity of governmental authority. Lastly we see him return to India as the supreme ruling authority, when problems of overwhelming consequences awaited solution, and appropriate his mature experience in fulfilment of the long endeavour of nation-building to which he had consecrated twelve years of his life, we see him engaged in the final task of placing the Government of the country in charge of its accredited leaders.

Though the flood-lights of publicity and propaganda are generally directed on the political aspirations of the country, its social and economic problems are, strictly speaking, of a much greater import and far more complex. Each of the series of immigrants from the early Aryan tribes down to the last northern invader in the eighteenth century brought into Hindustan new ideas, strange institutions and social forms, alternately changing, absorbing and destroying each other, crystalising the more rigid and

divorcing them from the main current of social life which gave them birth. These historic forces have resulted in weaving a social texture which is indeed unique. The rigidity of the Indian caste system has no parallel anywhere else, and while its basis has been blown to bits by the present economic forces, its unremoved debris continues to be a danger to social health. Its influence is all pervading and transcends the sway of modern life. Christianity, free from caste system elsewhere, has been invaded in this country by its ascendancy, and the Brahmin and non-Brahmin Christians of the South are quite as distinct and uncompromising in their isolation as their brethren in the original fold; Islam, the most democratic of all religions, has not escaped its cold grasp, and in Western India we have Islamic communities which scrupulously maintain their identity. The outcastes of Hindu society reveal another feature of the social phenomenon and suffer from a double dose of original sin. The treatment of women, child marriage and a compulsory life of frustration for widows, give rise to another series of complex problems, thwarting the endeavours of social regeneration. The fusion of various communities with an identity of purpose and ideals, so essential for sound nationalism, has been denied to India by force of historic circumstances, with the result that below the main current of national aspiration, flow a host of cross-currents, cutting one another at various points and frustrating the efforts of democratic solution. The vast majority of people being essentially conservative,—and in this we



include a portion of the educated section also—the foreign ruler can scarcely infringe on the holy of holies of tradition without rousing the ire of entrenched authority and its uncontrollable hosts. In the circumstances he has to undermine with indirect influence what he cannot do by direct assault. In the following pages we shall see how Lord and Lady Willingdon devoted themselves whole-heartedly to this task, we shall see the great measures they carried out for educational upliftment of the Depressed Classes, the widening organisations they set up for the well-being of the expectant mother, the new-born babe and the delinquent street-boy ; we shall see them infuse a new spirit of service among women of the leisured classes, utilise their time, wealth, and energy for the upliftment of their poorer and less fortunate sisters ; harness the talents and energies of men and women of every caste, community, and religion. The living inspiration of example and practice they left behind has been working like leaven in the social life of the two great Presidencies they dominated, and it is in no small measure responsible for the forces of direct social reform so dynamic to-day.

When Lord Willingdon took charge of the administration of Bombay he was admittedly new to the task, but the achievements of his rule there marked him out for higher and more responsible duties in the service of the Crown. On the eve of his departure from Bombay, amidst a chorus of appreciation and admiration, there was a speech delivered in the Legislative Council by that level-headed veteran Liberal leader, the Hon'ble Mr. B. S.

Kamat, which truly voiced intelligent opinion when he said: "I am sure that the public feeling in general in regard to Your Excellency is that Lord Willingdon would be more welcome, back again not as the Governor of Madras, but in another higher sphere, which will be at Delhi or Simla as the Viceroy of India. I say this with all the deference to the present Viceroy, who I do not say is unsympathetic to the people of India. But one thing which is uppermost in the minds of the people is that, if by chance Your Excellency were to come back to India, your liberalising influence as Viceroy would earn, I am sure, such deep respect from them that it will come to the same standard as that reached by one of the recent Viceroys, namely, Lord Hardinge."

If this was the expression of educated opinion on Lord Willingdon's stewardship of the Bombay Presidency, the opinion of the official world, based on more intimate experience, was equally enthusiastic about his past success and future hopes of greater attainment. Recording his impressions of the attitude of various Provincial Governments and the Government of India towards political reforms and their general outlook on Indian administrative problems, most of whom he takes severely to task, Mr. Montagu in his "Indian Diary" observes: "So ends Bombay. I leave with great admiration for the personality and character of Willingdon, and for the thorough energy and success of Lady Willingdon. She has done the thing most awfully well whilst we have been here. She is idolised by the people, and her work, her war work particu-

larly, has been amazing . . . . Bombay has been a great success, and is far the happiest and most progressive part of India, in which we ought to be able to go much further than anywhere else." And again he says : " You see he has been successful because he has sufficient political sagacity to do everything by negotiation. There is not the slightest doubt of his popularity, and in nearly everything the people of his Province would do whatever he liked, so that he builds a constitution upon his own experience." The significance of these remarks is well brought out when, in contrast with the above, we see Mr. Montagu's verdict on that great, benevolent and Victorian nobleman, Lord Pentland: "Madras has produced no contribution whatever to the discussion of the matters we have to deal with. The Government of India's letters and circulars are answered on half sheets of notepapers; the whirlwind rages round them; political storms wax and wane, and they remain obstructive, angry, sullen, effortless," and again he says: "I have not had any talk with Pentland; I really must before I leave here. I am quite sure that he is talking and acting under restraint, and I think I shall have to ask him what he would prefer to do—to stay on or to go home. I am certain that the Government of Madras is an impossible institution." After a long talk with Lord Pentland Mr. Montagu records: "I leave Madras with a heavy heart. It seems to me hopeless. Here, if anywhere, officials administer and do not govern; here, if anywhere, they refuse to explain themselves and hold themselves aloof; here, if anywhere, they

misuse power, either their Press Act or their powers to disallow resolutions and bills. Here they have caused their own situation. Madras is not the same place that it was five years ago. Brahmins and non-Brahmins, English and Indian—all have been set 'at loggerheads. We must have a vigorous Governor for Madras. Pentland does not know what is going on in his own Province. How can he know? He never discusses politics with his people." Mr. Montagu's admiration for the personality of Lady Willingdon knows no bounds: "The warmth, the lack of formality of Lady Willingdon. Dear old Freeman. How Lady Willingdon keeps her vitality I cannot understand. It is a wonderful thing. She comes to see if we are comfortable at all hours of the day; she alters the disposition of our luggage, and objects to our button-holes. But the aloofness is reduced here to the minimum, and I wish this spirit could be conveyed everywhere. Naturally, Willingdon has had no trouble with his people, but so much depends upon personality, which cannot always be reproduced."

With such a record of popularity and achievement Lord Willingdon succeeded Lord Pentland. The policy of personal negotiation, discussion and action, which had made for his success in Bombay when continued in Madras counteracted the effects of communal divisions, and the onslaught of the non-co-operation movement, and, before his departure placed the Presidency well on the road of constitutional progress. No wonder that when his appointment to the Indian viceroyalty was announced

in a situation of more acute crisis, responsible leaders in Bombay and Madras, as also those who had taken part in a virulent agitation against a public memorial to him on the eve of his departure from Bombay, joined in a hearty chorus of high expectation.

Lord Willingdon has already passed more than half his viceregal career. The beginning of his helmsmanship saw the ship of the State in the midst of stormy seas and he steered it into safe waters. He saw the finances of the Government in the depth of depression and placed them on a firm footing; he saw industry in plight and rescued it by timely help. Above all, he saw the admirable ambitions of his subjects for the enterprise of responsible Government and he laboured unrelentingly for their realisation. The stern measures he sanctioned to restore tranquil conditions might have temporarily affected his popularity among important sections of public opinion to-day, as it was affected at one time in Bombay and Madras, but we have not the slightest doubt that before he lays down the reins of his exalted office, the effects of his constructive policy will have so radically changed the attitude of this section that it will realise him to be what he is, an administrator of great talents, liberal opinions and far-sighted vision, who laboured honestly and zealously for the welfare of the seething millions of India's population, with a firm faith in the glorious mission of his motherland and the high destiny of the great and ancient country he was called upon to rule. When he lays down the responsibilities of his office, the Ordinances so essen-

tial for the proper discharge of his responsibilities in exceptional circumstances, so repugnant to his liberalism, will have been forgotten, their effects evaporated with the lapse of time; but the stamp of his constructive endeavour will continue to remain, to the lasting advantage of India, and to the glory of the Empire he served so well and so truly.



*IN BOMBAY*



*"The great part played by Your Excellency in the new reforms scheme will occupy one of the brightest pages in the annals of this country."*

—HON. MR. SALEBHOY BARODAWALLA.

*"He (Lord Willingdon) warns me against appearing to give something which does not in practice work out as big and as great as it looks on paper."*

—E. S. MONTAGU.

*"I had an interview with him (Lord Willingdon) and showed the draft Compulsory Education Bill to him... and it was because of that encouragement and sympathy that the bill sees the light of the day."*

—V. J. PATEL.

## POLITICAL POLICY OF LORD WILLINGDON

**T**HE Governorship of Bombay is one of the most coveted posts under Cabinet control. It was more so at the time Lord Willingdon assumed the office, for Bombay was then a paradise of the ruler. Political discontent, of a type common to-day, was undreamt of at the time; the Congress inaugurated its proceedings with a loyalty resolution; the labour population, sublimely ignorant of capitalist exploitation, celebrated its festive occasions by laying sacrificial offerings at the feet of the Goddess of Factories; the educated middle class had yet no difficulty in getting suitable jobs; the industrial and merchant classes were reaping the harvest of rising capitalism, the mill industry steadily expanding, the Presidency ports putting up fresh records of prosperity every year; the peasantry was in tune with the Infinite. Government exchequers all over the country were full to overflowing, and Gokhale had a job of it to convince the authorities that overflowing exchequers were not good for their souls. In short,

Bombay, or, for a matter of that, the whole country provided a most suitable field for the unrestricted operations of the usual ambitions of a liberal ruler to leave behind an enduring monument of high purpose. Little would one have dreamt that beneath this apparent calm was the smouldering lava of arrested politico-economic conflict, to be liberated by a European conflagration threatening imperial existence.

The view was not rosy in distant Europe. The dying embers of the Balkan War shot up at frequent intervals into glaring flames. On the day Lord Willingdon arrived in Bombay, European newspapers gave publicity to telegrams forecasting ominous developments on the Bulgarian frontier. The Balkan War died down ultimately, but those in the know were fully aware that it was to be the precursor of a more violent, more ruthless, more gigantic struggle in the near future. The general public, both in Europe and India, lived in a paradise of peace—a fool's paradise in fact. Little did they know that the rapidly growing trade and industrial rivalries between European nationalities were soon to turn more than half the world into a human slaughter-house. Lord Willingdon's Governorship of Bombay thus begins at the juncture of the end of what may be described as the old world and traverses the period that experienced the violent birth-pangs of the new one. His rulership can be judged from the use he made of peace-time opportunities for liberal progress, for reinforcing imperial loyalty during the War and the policy he pursued to assist laying the foundations of

a better India after the European blood-bath.

In a far greater sense than to-day an Indian Governorship in 1913-18 was a real rulership, for the Morley-Minto Reforms transferred but little responsibility to Indian shoulders. The constitution, in essence, left the 'irresponsible' executive in uncontrolled power, while the Council members could indulge in resolutions of no binding effect ; provincial Governors wielded powers rivalling those of the Moghuls of old, with this emphasis, that they were generally used with a benevolent intent. The charge that this benevolent autocracy is maintained with the backing of the machine-gun is easily refuted by the statement of barest facts. For an area covering 1,773,000 square miles with 70,000 villages and a population of 350,000,000 the military and civil frame-work is the weakest ever constructed in history for such a titanic task. The truth is that British rule, in spite of the Independence struggle, is essentially based on national consent. Without that consent it could not last for twenty-four hours. An uncompromising realisation of this basic fact is the essence of correct policy, and as subsequent events showed, no Governor gripped the truth more firmly than Lord Willingdon.

By general agreement the first task before Lord Willingdon was to allay the bitterness of social resentment not inevitable in the constitutional circumstances of the time. To-day it is Indian leaders—some of the greatest of them—who refuse co-operation ; then it was the bureaucracy which, the Indian leading opinion felt, refused the proffered hand of stalwart Liberals and avowed constitutionalists. In public belief

Gokhale was not always welcome in the Secretariat, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was sent into political wilderness, men of light and learning, responsible to the core, felt entrance difficult into the sacrosanct precincts of ruling counsels. It bred extremism, nursed resentment and hostility. Lord Willingdon effectuated a swift transformation, the gates of Government House opened wide for trusted Indian assent, Indian opinion and advice on measures Government proposed was eagerly sought, its reasonable grievances readily listened to and redressed. Men drifting into extremism were weaned back, men sent into political wilderness recalled to active life of sober advice. The wide ramifications of the Indo-British social contact are glimpsed in Mr. H. P. Mody's work on "Sir Pherozeshah Mehta": "With the advent of Lord Willingdon there came a change over the spirit of the Secretariat. The new Governor brought up in the vivifying atmosphere of the House of Commons, had the sagacity to recognise in the formidable critic of Government a most valued asset, and showed himself anxious to seek his co-operation on every occasion. Thus it came about that during the last two years of his long and varied career, Pherozeshah wielded an influence as great as was enjoyed by him in his palmiest days." The result of this resourceful policy was admitted by Lord Willingdon on various occasions, and in his presidential speech at the condolence meeting over the death of Sir Pherozeshah, Lord Willingdon said: "I remember very well when I first came to Bombay, having little acquaintance with Indians and no knowledge of Indian life, I had formed the impression that I

should find in Sir Pherozeshah Mehta the principal and most powerful opponent of Government in its efforts to carry on administration of the Presidency. But what has been my experience? I found in him a strong and resourceful opponent if he thought we were in the wrong, a warm and loyal supporter if he thought we were right, a fearless critic in his public life, but one who never allowed his public disagreement to interfere with his personal friendship. And in his private life I always found a true and loyal friend, a courteous gentleman, a man whom I have good reason to know was full of the warmest, deepest human sympathy. By his death I feel a real sense of personal loss . . . . . I have lost in him a sincere adviser, a frank critic, a staunch supporter." The nightmare of the War experienced the strength drawn by the administration through this conciliatory policy when the loyalty of Bombay was held aloft as a beacon-light to India and the Empire.

Lord Willingdon now turned to the more intrinsic problem of reinforcing the social foundation of the administrative structure. As said above an administration, holding itself responsible to authorities six thousand miles away and ruling over such a vast population, can subsist only on national consent. With this as the sheet-anchor Lord Willingdon altered the conduct of centralised authority and presented a series of devolutionary measures for further transference of power to district boards and municipalities, for increasing the elected element and restricting the scope of official sanction. The first year of his arrival saw the insertion of radical amendments into the Bom-

bay District Municipal Act, the Town Planning Bill, the bill endowing greater potency on Bombay Municipality to combat disease, and to control building operations and food supplies, and these went hand in hand with the bills to strengthen the District and City Police. The combination of these two sets of bills give the first glimpse of that dual policy which exposed his administration to wild charges from the Right and the Left, but which, later saved the British Indian Empire from the yawning chasm of awaiting chaos. While believing in the transfer of greater dominion to people's representatives, Lord Willingdon, even in those days, would do so only in combination with the fullest guarantee of the law established. Widening the administrative social basis as much as possible, he endowed the municipalities, local boards and village panchayats with enhanced responsibilities, so that the social position and influence of the people's natural leaders may be a source of strength, their services and talent may be harnessed for concordant progress, co-operation mobilised, discontent gradually liquidated.

Lord Willingdon impelled the devolutionary programme, if anything, with greater vigour during the prairie fire of the War, for at no time was the need of national accord greater. And herein lay the services of a real Liberal, for a parochial view defending tardy reforms lazily executed, would have had little potentiality, which was the greatest need of the period, in cementing imperial rule. During little over five years of Lord Willingdon's administration the number of munici-

palities electing their own presidents rose from 1 to 36, the number with two-thirds elected members from 19 to 67 in municipalities, from 1 to 18 in District Local Boards and from nil to 23 in Taluka Boards. By the end of his term all the District Local Boards throughout the Presidency had non-official presidents, while the number of those with non-official vice-presidents rose from 36 to 145. Besides the measures actually accomplished, schemes were framed for extension of representation and curtailment of official control, leading within a reasonable limit to full popular charge over local destinies. It is generally agreed that the autonomy contemplated in the provinces to-day was acquired by the districts over fifteen years ago. Before Lord Willingdon's departure the entire working of local self-government had been fully investigated by two different committees, and, based on their suggestions, two more bills were framed, though put through later by his successor. It is significant to note that, in contrast with the experience elsewhere, the Bombay Secretariat refused to indulge in irritating interference with the management of local bodies, and even the most radical or the most daring extremist could not direct the charge of officiousness against Lord Willingdon's administration. On the contrary, it was the nationalist press that often blamed the Government for not taking drastic steps against cases of municipal mismanagement. Anxious that the reforms devolved should not be sham, that the local bodies should improve through direct trial, Lord Willingdon decided that the Gov-



ernment's experienced hand should be used only in cases inevitable. A feature of the farewell functions on the eve of his departure was not only the unprecedented number of municipalities and local boards unanimously voting him public addresses but the appreciation they expressed for his heading forward to the journey's end of local self-government in the Presidency.

It is presumed that as a logical corollary to the preceding line of action was Lord Willingdon's advocacy, amidst a clamour of reactionary opposition, for the early establishment of full provincial autonomy. It is generally known that within a year of his arrival and right through the holocaust of the War, the one demand on which he, along with enlightened imperial opinion, insisted unrelentingly was for radical political reform and early provincial autonomy. In view of the fact that after over fifteen years of the most lightning changes in Indian political atmosphere, the advisability of such a step is still in the stage of contemplation, evinces, it may be granted, the ambitions he had to assist the rapid completion of the imperially allotted task of ushering national autonomy. When in answer to intelligent opinion Montagu declared for the early realisation of responsible Government in India, it is acknowledged by those in the know of things that no provincial Governor stood by him so firmly, amidst an unreasoning hullabaloo of reactionary imperialism, or offered more progressive proposals, no other province made a more definite contribution to solution of difficulties, nor, when the

emissary of reform reached India's shores, gave greater liberties to the expression of responsible voice. The full-hearted tribute Montagu paid in his "Indian Diary" to the fervour of Lord Willingdon for a great step forward towards the attainment of Indian self-government, the abuse Montagu had to face from vested interests, the conspiracies of opposition he revealed, the open hostility he had to fight, the tortuous diplomacy he had to encounter,—all form a most interesting drama enacted behind the scenes of the crystalisation of the reforms, and bring into bright relief Lord Willingdon's sturdy backing to a courageous constitutional venture. It might perhaps be unpleasant to extract passages from the "Diary" to contrast Lord Willingdon's attitude with that of others. Mr. Montagu declares that the one person in authority to stand firmly by him was His Excellency the Governor of Bombay.

"It is a perfect God-send to me to meet, on my first arrival, an old friend like Freeman, whom I have known politically and socially through the years. I feel that I can talk to him quite frankly and the sight of a friendly face when my spirits are at the lowest and the enormity of my task is most obvious to me, is something that I have got to thank Providence for," said Montagu in the "Diary", and continued, "And now I must record at some length my conversations with Freeman. We are both so pleased with ourselves at meeting one another that our conversation on my side was, and I think his, completely unrestrained. So far as I can gather, the policy which he is going to put forward is this:

complete autonomy for the provinces; he would even favour their direct control by the Government of India; complete control of all matters by the Legislative Council, with an enormous elected majority, something like sixty to ten, and no safeguard on the veto of the Governor, which he says he would freely exercise without hesitation, because the *Hukum* is understood traditionally by the Indian and would not be resented . . . . . Freeman wants the India Council appointed for only three years, in order to ensure that they are 'modern in their Indian experience . . . . . Freeman's story is really one long story of the remoteness of the Government of India, and its lack of co-operation with the Provincial Governments—the formality and officialdom which ride together. There is also his firm belief in the lack of training of the Indians and their lack of courage. But while others would wait for this, he is politician enough to wish to give them a chance in order that they may learn and get a real substantial chance. He warns me against appearing to give something which does not in practice work out as big and as great as it looks on paper."

Lord Willingdon had pressed for the reforms before others, and with an opportunity advanced he was naturally most ardent to give them a practical shape. "Your Excellency's advice on the Reforms has been of the most liberal nature" said the Hon. Mr. (Now Dr.) R. P. Paranjpye in the Bombay Council, "and we only wish that Your Excellency's advice had been followed at the time it was given and not long after when it was too late." A similar tribute was paid

by the Hon. Mr. Salebhoy Barodawalla when he said: "The great part played by Your Excellency in the new reforms scheme will occupy one of the brightest pages in the annals of the history of this country." The Hon. Mr. Paranjpye acknowledged the same fact in a vivid form in saying: "I would ask those people who pass an unfavourable judgment upon your administration and make bitter and undeserved criticism upon it, I would ask them one straight question. What Governor would they have liked to have at the helm of affairs in this Presidency considering the names that have preceded during the last 20 or 25 years? I think if such a straight question is asked, there will be no doubt about what the answer will be. I think if the educated public opinion were consulted as to whom they would like to have at the helm of affairs when our Presidency is entering a new life and looks forward to greater political advance, as to whom they would like to have as Governor to pilot the new reform scheme through the initial stages, the answer would be a definite verdict in favour of His Excellency."

According to authoritative opinion the contribution Lord Willingdon made in stressing the demand for provincial self-government was great and effective, but those in intimate contact knew that his exploration and exploitation of the opportunities, within the existing constitution, through imparting greater authority to responsible shoulders was equally great if not greater. Bombay had seen him ease the tension between political thought and official mind, expand the elective principle in local autonomy

and thus lay the initial corner-stone of the concept of provincial home rule. But what was his policy in the already existing Council? Under the Morley-Minto Reforms Civil Service members formed a solid majority in the Council assuring ready passage of measures coming from the permanent executive, and thwarting, if necessary, of non-official bills and resolutions, opposed by the executive. The fact is admitted that this process had become so mechanical that elected members scarcely hoped for the execution of their policies, and beyond indulging in lengthy, platitudinous speeches, they could contribute but little towards the progress of the broad masses they sought to champion. Their carefully drafted resolutions and measured periods, pitched in Pittite style and circulated in advance of delivery, were wasted on the Treasury benches and listened to with a hardly concealed attitude of boredom. It is on record that not on one occasion before 1913 could an elected member carry through a resolution against the wishes of the Secretariat, not on one occasion could a popular but officially unwelcome bill hope to go on the statute book or unpalatable criticism be effective, not once could a civilian member express independent opinion or vote against Government House views. The Legislative Council reports for the period reveal that Lord Willingdon's regime metamorphosed the procedure.

Indian Liberal journals record that the Legislative Council, which, dearth of imagination had turned into a futile debating society of uncouth school boys, became from 1913 onwards a live parliamentary

institution, elected members came into intimate touch with administrative activities, floated less in vapour and presented practical shape to deserving ameliorative schemes. Utopian resolutions rapidly went out of fashion; typescript oratory vanished with equal swiftness; the grand periods became relics of a bygone age and were replaced by salty and erudite sallies. Impartial observers found Council members acquire more debating acumen, greater self-possession and a better realisation of legislative purpose. Their talents, experience, and national outlook could now be utilised for the amelioration of the country and the stabilisation of Government.

The record of speeches from non-official members shows that Lord Willingdon, as President of the Council, was impressed that there could be little constitutional progress without the germination of parliamentary responsibility. The combination of boldness with courtesy in the expression of views, the virtues of compromise, the usefulness of thought and study in handling a subject under discussion are the essentials of parliamentary power, and when the mechanical operation of official strength was put to an end, the elected members had to be argued with and convinced, and the official block freed to use its discretion on many of the non-official resolutions, the Council rejuvenation was completed. From the mockery and farce that it was once, the Legislative Council became a parade ground for the assumption of powers to come. This essential spade-work on the path to the ideal of Swaraj could be performed by one steeped in the traditions of

liberalism and imbued with the spirit of parliamentary procedure, and it is well-known that Lord Willingdon did it because he had the requisite qualification, temperament and inclination. "In reference to it (the presidentship) I and all my friends feel that in carrying out the work of the Council as President you have shown the most untiring patience," said the Hon. Mr. G. K. Parekh, the oldest and most respected member of the Council, and continued: "We have also to say that in carrying out your duties you have shown to the members the utmost courtesy. We have also to say that . . . . the work of the Council has been conducted with the greatest smoothness and dignity, and prestige of this Council has always been upheld, and the relations between you and other members of the Council have been of a most cordial character, and we attribute all this to the way in which you have been good enough to conduct yourself during the whole period that you held the presidentship of this Council." "It is no exaggeration to say that this Council Hall will greatly miss your commanding eloquence, your great debating power, your gift of ready, lucid, and convincing speech, which always helped to raise the tone of our proceeding" said the Hon. Mr. (now Sir) P. Sethna: "We need hardly assure Your Excellency that you are retiring from your high position, and with yourself, Lady Willingdon, with the respect, the admiration and the gratitude of the people for the great wisdom, the pure purpose and the steady will with which you have conducted the administration."

The Hon. Mr. Vithalbhai J. Patel, one of

the staunchest critics of Government, gave a direct illustration of the new Council policy when referring to his Compulsory Education Bill, passed with Government's assistance, he said: "In all fairness I am bound to say that I cannot accept the compliments and congratulations for managing and handling this all important question of compulsory education so well and so soon. Very soon after I moved my resolution at the last December meeting I drafted this Bill and went to His Excellency personally. I had an interview with him and showed the draft bill to him. He then encouraged me and it was because of that encouragement and his sympathy that the bill sees the light of the day. I, with the permission of the honourable members, therefore, transfer the congratulations to the person who deserves them most." The Hon. Mr. S. B. Upasani gave vivid expression to the same feelings when he said: "The Hon. Mr. Paranjpye has taken credit for the defeats that we gave to Government . . . . . and I do regard the defeats we gave to Government as landmarks of our progress and of Your Excellency's liberal attitude towards us. I need hardly state that with abler leaders like the late Sir Pherozeshah Mehta we were not able to give any defeat in the past. In those days whatever the strength of our cause we were never able to carry our point. During Your Excellency's time I see that several resolutions have been accepted and carried in spite of Government's opposition."

Consistent with the aims of obliterating social estrangement, creating greater efficacy in the expres-



sion of district and town administration and the endeavour to make the Legislative Council a realistic precursor to parliamentary responsibility and tradition, was his larger policy of tolerant liberalism towards the general political agitation in the Presidency. Owing to the establishment of peace in the countryside, the amplitude for rise the educated had under the dispensation of British rule, the opportunity industrialists possessed for steady expansion of their field of action, the removal of the few discord roots like the partition of Bengal and the grant of political reforms associated with the names of Mr. Morley and Lord Minto, political disquietitude on Lord Willingdon's arrival was at its lowest. Lok. B. G. Tilak, the progenitor of national revival in Maharashtra, returned from Mandalay in the midst of the War to preach the virtues of recruitment. Gopal Krishna Gokhale saw the hand of Providence in the domination of foreign rule and did not hesitate to say so. Pherozeshah Mehta, the lion of Bombay, smarting under inspired press attacks, was weaned from leftward trend ultimately to become a foremost protagonist of Lord Willingdon's administration. Mehta bossed the political life of the Presidency; he was the uncrowned king of the Congress. What more could Lord Willingdon desire? The Liberals held the Congress in the hollow of their hands. The Extremists, routed after the Surat Congress and deprived of leadership through the enforced absence of Tilak, could not for years stage a come-back. But the situation was swiftly changing, for political meteorology is not an exact science.

The main factor that turned the tide was the starting of a powerful nationalist English daily organ, the first of its kind in the Presidency, under the editorship of Mr. B. G. Horniman. The boldness with which it advocated the Indian cause, ventilated popular grievances and attacked officials, high and low, electrified the whole political atmosphere. It dazzled the romanticism of the educated still under the spell of Western political ideology. What was of greater consequence, it ushered in a new technique in Indian journalism; it gave the most valued lessons to the Indian press in the propaganda purpose of news and in its scientific exploitation. Practically all vernacular nationalist dailies in the Presidency followed its editorial policy and copied its display technique. Political life of the Presidency was vivified as never before. Accounts of political meetings, thrown in obscure corners of the Anglo-Indian journals and mishandled by the vernacular press, now shouted through the most prominent pages of the "Bombay Chronicle". Complaints, grievances, 'injustices', the pro-official press would not and the Indian dare not publish, now had the widest and most effective broad-cast organ. Official policies and actions, formerly discussed in sober and measured terms, were now subjected to the most ruthless attacks. The Indian press trailed the lead of the "Bombay Chronicle". Realising the value of a free press run on constitutional lines to the health of the administration, its utility in outletting popular emotions and keeping Government informed of political health condition, Lord Willingdon, right

through the War, it is admitted, gave the fullest liberty to the press, and thus released those forces which enabled him to advocate with cogency the piling of a lofty political edifice.

In distant Africa was the second factor operating to accelerate the velocity of political transformation in India. Mr. Gandhi's Satyagraha Movement in that land with its tales of suffering and sacrifice, of injustices done and humiliations submitted to, were broadcast with daring headlines in the "Bombay Chronicle" and other papers, and the educated classes, so far confined to the rightful limits of legal action, were infused with the spirit of the teachings of the Galilean hill-sides. The termination of the South African Movement, resulting in jail delivery and signed agreement with the ascetic leader, further emboldened the political consciousness of the intellectuals and directed a leftward swing to nationalist sentiment. The return of the votary of direct action to the land of his birth, his entry into the Indian political arena, the no-tax initiation in Kaira and the extraordinary press publicity it received soon propelled Indian politics from the safe waters of constitutionalism near to the rocks and shoals of ambitious idealism.

The third and easily the greatest factor that redoubled the political tempo was the War. Great Britain could not wage a war under the soul-stirring slogan of Defence of Democracy and continue to deny democratic Government to its greatest dependency; Woodrow Wilson could not advocate the inalienability of the right of self-determination

without India requisitioning its practical application. The war slogans were the idiological factor leading the message of liberty to distant parts of the land. The economic strain of the War led, more directly, to a vague but urgent demand for a swift change. We do not propose at present—for we shall touch the subject later—to go into the commercial, industrial, financial and economic upheavals which placed a severe strain on the already debt-ridden peasantry and working population. Suffice it to state that this soil gave birth to the Home Rule Movement. The seeds of agitation sown by the great apostle of Theosophy and her lieutenants fell on a fertile field. Political unrest invaded all classes of people. Villagers and townsmen, students and teachers, tradesmen, speculators, factory workers and dockmen were all within the firing range of the Home Ruler.

It will be seen from the statute books of the time that Lord Willingdon had extensive powers at his command to smother the movement. The Defence of India Act passed with the sanction of the elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council, enacted wider executive powers than the host of Ordinances issued in 1931; the Press Act and the Seditious Meetings Act could muzzle the press and smash the platform, but Blue-book records show that Lord Willingdon refused to set these steam-rollers into motion and taking a different view he chose to harness responsible opinion to serve the Commonwealth purpose. Greater the unrest, wider were the gates of Government House and the Secretariat opened to let in Indian advice, larger the liberties

sanctioned in the Council Hall, more extensive the gubernatorial tours for direct popular contact, more sustained the educative propaganda to temper political impatience. When co-operation in the prosecution of the War was the supreme need and the masses were called upon to redouble their sacrifices, accelerate recruitment, swell the war chest and mobilise the war essentials, wielding the big rod would hardly have been the best way of getting it done. Trained in the traditions of liberalism and nourished in an atmosphere of freedom, Lord Willingdon, it was observed, allowed the movement to take its own course as long as it did not endanger the safety of the State, relied on counter-propaganda and liberal action to neutralise the agitation effects. The policy was pre-eminently successful for, it is recognised, that no province shouldered the war burden so lightly, none underwent more willing sacrifices or remained more loyal than Bombay under Lord Willingdon. The very authors of the unrest were amazed at the official tolerance.

Giving a true picture of the socio-political transformation Bombay experienced during Willingdonian regime, the Hon. Mr. Parekh rightly said in the Council: "Portions of the Presidency in which politics were unknown before tried to show by their movements the effects that had been produced by the War and by the utterances of big statesmen which were due to the War . . . . . We have seen in other provinces how some of the heads of the presidencies lost their patience and lost their heads and they were led to acts which made them exceedingly unpopular, but Your Excellency has always

kept his head cool. There have not been, so far as our Presidency is concerned, any such acts of repression about which the people generally complain, and the Presidency has to thank Your Excellency for the extremely good temper with which the administration was conducted during these hard times." Another leading light of Indian Liberalism gave support to the same sentiments when Mr. (now Sir) Pheroze Sethna observed: "Imbued with a desire to do the best you can for those committed to your care, you set yourself right from the start to form personal friendships and thus won the confidence of the leaders by your unconcealed support of their legitimate aspirations, you have throughout respected the feelings of that section of Indians whose opinions have not drifted into dangerous shoals. You have realised that it is only by the study of the welfare of the people that the foundation of British rule in India can be strengthened and solidified. You have recognised that the administration must be a means to an end and not an end in itself. We therefore owe it to your balanced judgment, your vigour and vigilance that Bombay has enjoyed peace and tranquillity during your regime."

If in the management of the political situation, stable opinion believed Lord Willingdon to have displayed his transcendent ability as a ruler and statesman, in the handling of the strident movement launched against him personally towards the end of his term, he exercised a magnanimity of heart unexpected by his opponents, and established that the wide powers in his services were to serve no personal end.

The record, in these pages, of the services he rendered to the country and the Empire is, we imagine, sufficient to meet the charges against him. It is necessary for us only to recall here that no Governor before Lord Willingdon and none after him was subjected to such unjust pillory, such propaganda of exaggeration and misrepresentation. The entire purpose of his administration was placed at the wrong end of the telescope and seen through pitch-dark glasses. He who had done more perhaps than any other British Indian ruler to advocate reform was represented as an enemy of progress; he who had, within the framework of the constitution, brought about the greatest change in matters of local self-government was accused of autocratic interference with municipal and local enterprise by people who wailed for such interference; he who increased the efficiency and strength of the police so extensively and guaranteed the greatest security to his subjects in times when no Government could guarantee the usual measure of security, was arraigned for neglecting the protection of law-abiding subjects by a set of people who had scant respect for law and authority; he who had given greater freedom to the press and platform than any other ruler in India was impugned for high-handedness, autocracy and repression; he who had rendered such distinguished services to the Empire was maligned by its enemies with neglecting the interests of the Empire they abhorred.

When the storm subsided the intelligentsia realised that the greatness of Lord Willingdon was brought out in all its splendour when he faced this

unthinking and misguided propaganda which had regard neither for human feelings nor for the requirements of public decency. Distinguishing between the interests of the State and the inclinations of personal feelings, and befitting the tradition of his office he permitted the fullest freedom to the anti-memorial move, and it is noteworthy that the policy itself disillusioned a large section of the public regarding the truth of the slander campaign and enhanced the reputation of the Governor. A fit reply to the agitation was given by Mr. (now Sir) Chunilal Mehta when he remarked: "It is the misfortune of Your Excellency's position as well as that of your honourable colleagues that when you are attacked in public, on the platform and in the press, you have not the opportunities of replying to those criticisms. But I venture to think that when history comes to be written in future, and when things are looked at in their true perspective, the judgment will be clear that Your Excellency has taken very great pains to do all you can towards the furtherance of the aspirations of Indians in matters which vitally affect them and for which they have been long agitating." The Secretary of State and the British Cabinet gave a more effective reply by appointing Lord Willingdon to the Governorship of Madras.



## THE WAR AND POLITICAL UNREST

THE fourth day of August 1914 will ever remain a nightmare experience for the present generation, it will be remembered by generations yet unborn. It was a Coconut Day when the news was flashed to Bombay that England had declared for the defence of the sanctity of treaties and was determined to the last man and the last penny to face the hell hounds of murder. An atmosphere of mystification and anxiety spread over the happy holiday crowd that had thronged the great carnival on the Esplanade Maidan. The numerous stalls were packed with playthings "Made in Germany." German goods had captured Indian imagination, they had created an admiration for the skill and ingenuity of a people whose enterprise could send out goods so attractive and so cheap. And now what was going to happen? There was no question regarding the strength behind the truculent challenge of the thorough-going enemy. There was also no question that barring a section of the lower middle class which gloated over the strident advance of the human wall of German

forces, the fall of the shell-torn Belgian fortresses, and the massacre of the "Contemptibles," the entire masses and their accredited leaders stood solidly by the Empire in the hour of its greatest trial.

The issues involved were of such far-reaching imperial consequence and the balance of strength so even that as late as 1918, six months prior to the triumphant overthrow of the uncurbed militarism, Montagu, hearing of the last German offensive, when it could not possibly have been so deadly as three years earlier, pathetically noted in his "Indian Diary": "There is rather a horror over us all. The new German offensive makes one realise, as one has always realised, that in all work for after the war one is building on what may be sand. Are we going to have an Empire after the war? I can honestly say that my work this six months has helped, because it has kept India quiet. But what is happening in France?"

Saving the Empire! It required an effort unknown in human history. To evoke the loyal co-operation of India, to keep the three hundred millions of humanity contented while the army and the navy were engaged in a struggle unmerciful, trade receiving fitful jerks, food prices soaring high, traffic and transport dislocated, house rents scaling up, while there were panics on the stock exchange and the silver market, run on banks, postal savings and currency offices—to combat all these and then to requisition the resources of the country, its trade and industry, its politicians and peasantry, its manhood and womanhood in one supreme endeavour to

rescue Europe and its civilisation—was a task failure in which would have meant disintegration of the Empire and many other things besides. Events showed that His Majesty's Government could not have been in a more fortunate position than to have had Lord Willingdon at the helm of the administration of a Presidency which had to bear the brunt of the War as no other Indian province. It is a matter of history that no Governor made a greater success of his historic duties than Lord Willingdon.

The War upset all calculations in Bombay more, perhaps, than elsewhere in the country. Its first shock played ducks and drakes with commerce. The export of merchandise during the first eight months fell, as compared with the same period for the preceding year, by 43 per cent., the import of merchandise by 34 per cent.; Germany, the next best customer of India after Great Britain, went out of the picture; trade with France and Belgium collapsed completely; to prevent food stuffs being transhipped through neutral countries into the enemy's territories Government placed severe restrictions on the export of raw material. German shippers, having the second largest interest in India, were imprisoned in the Baltic, the British and the French were preoccupied with the demands of defence, the Americans were absorbed in the requirements of France and Britain, and so the freight charges rose up by leaps and bounds. They doubled and doubled again till in 1915-16, they were eleven times the pre-war level and in 1916-17 fourteen times as high. Bombay's business was in the throes of palsied fits. In 1914-15

its sea-borne trade fell by over 60 crores, land trade declined proportionately, credit was severely restricted, the mill industry, consequent on the cessation of import of German dyes, suffered severe checks, commodity prices rose and fell by fits and starts. But every vested interest realised that Lord Willingdon was keeping firm at the helm, for he watched every development, noted every reaction and applied the necessary remedy, so that not only was the whole administration kept trim and in the top form but political discontent ebbed lower than before the War, and the Administration Report for 1914-15 recorded : "It might have been expected that the war would have given feelings of insecurity and unrest which would have been reflected in an increase in crime statistics. So far from this being so, the number of persons charged with offences decreased considerably—a remarkable testimony to the confidence of the people in the stability of Government."

In the second year of the War the gross revenue of the province declined by as much as Rs. 127 lakhs, sea-borne trade fell by a third, the coastal trade by over 57 crores, private trade by over 3 crores. The Central Government contributions for education and other purposes were totally stopped and provincial savings with them practically confiscated, but reports from the nation-building departments showed that within the means at his disposal, Lord Willingdon held aloft the banner of progress. To give a few illustrations it may be pointed out that, in response to public opinion, in the course of one year 120 liquor shops were closed down, loans were sanc-

tioned to be raised by the Bombay Improvement Trust when floatation of loans for non-War purposes was stringently discouraged, town planning rules made more rigorous, medical facilities in the mofussils increased, new roads built, railway lines extended, forest department reorganised and placed on a commercial basis.

Some of the causatives discomposing trade in 1914-15 disappeared in course of time. Export to England was fostered from 1915 onwards with state devices. Demands for India's produce increased, but in 1915-16 an unfavourable monsoon told on agrarian condition. Next year the monsoon was more generous, but the war burden began pressing heavily on the poorer community. Decreasing imports and increasing exports, in given circumstances, mean a widening of the gulf between the rich and the poor. And that is what happened in India. The following figures obtained with prices of 1913-14 as the base tell their own tale :

		1913-14	1914-15	1915-16	1916-17
Imports	...	127.5	95.6	73.1	62.8
Exports	...	166	119	129.1	140.9
			1917-18	1918-19	
Imports	...		51.9	94.9	
Exports	...		130.6	113.5	

To traders, speculators, manufacturers and middlemen the War proved a combined mint and a high-speed currency press. Bombay mills met the clothing requirements of the Army in Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Africa ; suspension of Lancashire competition further helped Indian mill magnates to swell their bank

accounts. Price of cloth rose up 200 to 300 per cent. above the pre-War level. So did foodstuff prices at the point of retail sale. Food speculators and grain-merchants garnered bumper harvests of profits. House rents in Bombay, Karachi, Ahmedabad, and other towns mounted up with the decreasing real wages of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie. Cotton mills, working double-shift, brought fresh recruits to the feverish activity of crowded cities, but wages did not keep pace with the increasing cost of living. In the teeth of landlord opposition the Bombay Government pushed the Rent Control Bill through the Council and saved a situation fraught with serious consequences. The justification of that bill given by Lord Willingdon constitutes one of the finest expositions of Liberal ideals of citizenship and public duty, and exposes the folly of grabbing, short-sighted landlordism which he saved from suicide.

With the background of the growing chasm between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat political radicalism came into his own again. Rallied by the Morley-Minto Reforms, Liberal prestige at the outset of the War stood at its crest. It held strategic positions, it occupied important seats in Government conclaves. But the direction of the masses down an inclined economic plane combined with the popular appeal of the War slogans, gave a swift upward turn to political thought current. Economic effects of the War, combined with what bordered on famine conditions in Gujerat, initiated Mr. Gandhi's first experiment in Kaira District. Lord Willingdon's hands were full without inviting political trouble, and

soon after Mr. Gandhi's arrival in Bombay he assured Mr. Gandhi of his readiness to redress any genuine grievances. What happened at the interview is recorded in Mr. Gandhi's autobiography and shows Lord Willingdon's willingness in enlisting, if possible, the valuable services of the avowed apostle of Tolstoyan doctrines. Says Mr. Gandhi: "The moment I reached Bombay Gokhale sent me word that the Governor was desirous of seeing me, and that it might be proper for me to respond before I left for Poona. Accordingly I called on His Excellency. After the usual inquiries he said, 'I ask one thing of you. I would like you to come and see me whenever you propose to take any steps concerning Government . . . . You may come to me whenever you like, and you will see that my Government do not wilfully do anything wrong.' To which I replied: 'It is that faith which sustains me'." The Kaira no-tax campaign blazed out all the same.

Following the Liberal traditions of the West the Congress so far had been a strictly constitutional opposition. Eager to inject the doctrines of Satyagraha and spiritual force in Indian politics, Mr. Gandhi found in Kaira conditions a first-class opportunity and went straight in for a no-tax struggle. As to-day, Lord Willingdon refused negotiation for a settlement, but after the movement had subsided large concessions were sanctioned for peasant relief. The result of the movement is explained by Mr. Gandhi in "Experiments with Truth": "The campaign came to an unexpected end. It was clear

that the people were exhausted, and I hesitated to let the unbending be driven to ruin. I was casting about for some graceful way of terminating the struggle which would be acceptable to a Satyagrahi . . . . However the end was far from making me feel happy inasmuch as it lacked the grace with which the termination of every Satyagraha campaign ought to be accompanied. The Collector carried on as though he had done nothing by way of a settlement."

The administrative measures handling the Kaira Satyagraha were exploited by the leftist politicians to vilify the Governor. He was accused of every crime, charged of callousness to the sufferings of the peasantry, of breaking the requirements of the revenue code, of sanctioning oppression and buttressing professional tyrants. Mr. Parekh, who represented the district in the Bombay Legislative Council and considerably supported the Satyagraha movement at least in its initial stages, proved that the facts were exactly the reverse. He said on the eve of Lord Willingdon's departure: "I am referring, sir, to the Kaira difficulties which arose in the earlier part of this year. In it I see from the manner in which the solution of the difficulty was arrived at exercise of the greatest statesmanship . . . . The solution of the question was that from those people who were able to pay the revenue it should be collected, and to those who are unable to pay suspension should be given. In this way the people felt that a way was found out for getting over the difficulty. In reference to the Government treasury there was not any sacrifice of



their revenue which could have been collected. In reference to the people I myself had the experience of how in the past when there were hard times the revenue used to be collected and I know that people used to be put to considerable harassment to get revenue out of them; but during these hard times we saw that the people were saved from all harassment and their gratitude is due to the directions of Your Excellency and to the feeling of your officers that Your Excellency was not likely to tolerate any measures which would cause harassment to your people."

The novelty of the campaign obtained for the Kaira Satyagraha a high-powered broadcast. As Mr. Gandhi says: "The campaign was not, however, without its indirect effective results which we can see to-day and the benefits of which we are reaping. The Kaira Satyagraha marks the beginning of an awakening among the peasants of Gujerat, the beginning of their true political education." As a result of the Kaira ferment and the war stress the political tide rose higher and higher with Britain's increasing strain on the blood-stained fields of Flanders. While the Austrian forces had reduced the Italian army to pulp and the Empire's scattered man-power was being shipped out of the shell-torn rocks of Dardanelles, Mrs. Besant was busy forging sanction behind the Home Rule demand. Her stentorian voice, passionate eloquence, masterful personality and organising genius were directed to send out a call to the nation at once to hark her back to her ancient glory, institutions and achievements, and to make these as

the springs of inspiration for demanding modern institutions little known in ancient India, modern political rights and liberties not of general prevalence in the glory that was Ind. The membership of the Home Rule League swelled into thousands, its branches sprouted out in every district, its message reached the villages. Such agitation in the midst of the War was hardly helpful, but experience showed that Lord Willingdon would not sanction repression of a movement yet within the four corners of the ordinary law. Persons with a stake in the country stated that he stretched the law in favour of the politician, allowed liberties no autocrat would have tolerated, and the paucity of sedition proceedings amazed the very authors of the agitation. The world will perhaps never know of the persistent clamour of orthodox elements for a 'stronger' policy, and of how assiduously Lord Willingdon fought against it. Lord Willingdon knew that suppression would have swelled the ranks of the discontented when active harmony was an urgent necessity, for only a few months later events showed how the blood-stained squares of Petrograd and the desolate wastes of howling Siberia generated the dynamite that rocked the Russian ruling class out of power and blew the ancient monarchy on the scrap-heap of history, while the British Empire came out of the cleansing fire stronger and purer than ever before.

Allowing the agitation to take its own course Lord Willingdon endeavoured to liquidate its effects through his extensive social contact tours across the Presidency. Whether among the rich rice tracts of the Konkan,

or through the sandy plains of Cutch, among the baggy-trouserred denizens of Sind or in the gorgeous forests of Karnatak, in the painted halls of Princely India or beneath the thatched roofs of the farmer, in the slum-lands of Ahmedabad and amidst gipsy camps on the wild moors, Lord Willingdon carried the message of the War and the high mission of the Empire, the good intentions of the rulers and the moral eminence of the administration. Caste organisations and communal institutions, clubs, societies, and associations, the tiny toddle with satchel in his hand, the dainty lady in her fashionable limousine, the clerk at the desk, the mill-worker at the machine, the temple priest amidst the clanging bells, the imam and the reverend gentleman, Lord Willingdon was in constant touch with them all, mobilising their time, energy, and talent for war services, meeting the criticism of the politician and the pressman their charges and allegations.

Bombay's War activities and sacrifices increased in geometric progression. Upto the end of 1916 the Presidency contributed 6,613 men for direct recruitment, in 1917 the figure rose to 26,833 and in the ten months of 1918 it mounted unexpectedly to 40,533. The total contribution of combatants alone was 74,000 men apart from the non-combatant force which had invaded France, Mesopotamia, Africa, Palestine and Gallipoli. To the first War loan Bombay contributed more than ten crores. When the resources of the Presidency seemed exhausted by the first War loan, Bombay gave, in the midst of the virulent Home

Rule movement, fifteen and a half crores to the second War loan. The Presidency War Relief Fund was another achievement of Lord Willingdon's inspiration. It is noteworthy that collections and contributions from the town and the district village, benefit performances, cinema shows, races, and exhibitions, so swelled the fund as to be the pride of the Presidency, the envy of the neighbouring provinces and the admiration of the Commonwealth. In the Women's Branch of the Presidency War Relief Fund it is recognised that the dynamic but affable personality of Lady Willingdon was the driving power. It was a usual spectacle to see women of fashion, leaders of society, serious-minded social workers, suffragists and purdah-nishin women, brushing shoulders in the common pursuit of relief for the victims from the hell-fronts of War. The needs and comforts of the sick and the suffering, their pleasures and pastimes, received the tender care of the Women's Branch of the Relief Fund, which in the post-war period developed into an institution of ministry for the expectant mother, the sickly child and the destitute woman, permanently established. The magnificent buildings of the Western India Museum and the Royal Institute of Science, delightfully situated and equipped with the latest appliances of medical ingenuity, were turned into Lady Hardinge and Freeman Thomas Hospitals respectively, and in their provisions of comfort, scientific treatment, and hygienic arrangement surpassed most of the War hospitals in the East. They were the rendezvous of Lady Willingdon and her buzzing co-workers, at

home in her company. Men from the various divisions of St. John's Ambulance Brigade, Hindu, Parsi, and Cosmopolitan, were ready at the dock to disembark the wounded in comfort and to transport them with care. A regiment coming from the north proceeding to some unknown destination,—Lady Willingdon was there warmly to receive them, to give them a word of cheer on their hazardous journey, which, alas, in too many cases proved fatal.

Mass loyalty thus mobilised, was, at a stroke of Montagu's famous declaration galvanised into accelerated activity. The announcement that the Secretary of State was personally going to investigate the establishing of responsible Government further roused vocal opinion. India was jubilant over the forthcoming arrival of the representative of the King's Government. The reactionary section was none too happy, the orthodox civilians would not enthuse, an influential Simla section was none too happy. Mr. Montagu has recorded that nowhere was he given more cordial reception, nowhere were arrangements for garden parties, dinners, and interviews made with greater care and thought than in Bombay. The contrast between Bombay and other provinces is strikingly depicted in Montagu's "Diary": "We reached Bombay at 8-30 this morning, just as I finished dictating my diary for the previous day. We were greeted by Freeman, and drove through small crowds to Government House. I think Government House, Bombay, is one of the most beautiful spots in the world . . . . The Viceroy and I occupy one bungalow.

My bed-room is in the central part of it, and round the rectangular building is my dressing-room, my bath-room, my breakfast-room, my sitting-room, my office, all tastefully furnished in Lady Willingdon's favourite mauve and white. It is upon a height and outside is the sea, facing east, with sea sunsets that have got to be seen to be believed . . . . The warmth, the lack of formality of the greeting of Lady Willingdon Dear old Freeman! How Lady Willingdon keeps her vitality I cannot understand. It is a wonderful thing. She comes to see if we are comfortable at all hours of the day; she alters the disposition of our luggage, and objects to our buttonholes. But aloofness is reduced here to a minimum, and I wish this spirit could be conveyed everywhere. Naturally, Willingdon has had no trouble with his people, but so much depends upon personality, which cannot always be reproduced." Mr. Montagu was so much impressed with Lord Willingdon's success that on April 22, 1918, he recorded in the "Diary": "We lunched together and talked together till three o'clock. We came to the conclusion that Sly should be the next member of the Viceroy's Council; that Robertson should succeed O'Dwyer and Cleveland should succeed Robertson; that Willingdon should go to Madras, and Hopwood to Bombay. I wonder how much of this will be done."

It will be admitted that this appreciation by one who more than anybody else knew the inner working of different governments in India and who so mercilessly attacked heads of so many provinces is enough to meet criticism of ignorant outsiders.

Hardly ever were Lord Willingdon's sympathies and ambitions shown in more pleasant relief than at the end of his term. With Montagu's departure political agitation took a fresh stride forward. The Administration Report for 1917-18 implies the reasons when it says: "The most characteristic feature of the year was a general and very marked rise in prices. The diminished output of the year, the withholding of stock in expectation of further rise in prices, transport difficulties due to war conditions, all contributed to a great and serious rise in prices of foodstuff, cloth, and other articles of general consumption. In addition, rents of houses went up abnormally." To encounter the plight the committee appointed for restriction of commodity prices had been replaced by a more drastic application of food control; the Rent Act was in force and other measures were adopted; a run on Government bullion had been faced; panic in the share market was got under control through legal measures. Lord Willingdon was no more responsible for these panics, tensions, breakdowns, than the man in the moon, but these fomented discord and pilloried the Governor. The result of the opposition to a public memorial to Lord Willingdon was, however, that the harvest crop of farewell meetings, garden parties, and addresses, was more bounteous than on any previous occasion. Usual though the functions, careful observation showed that the ring of sincerity and feeling evinced on this occasion were of a type it had not been the good fortune of all before him to experience. The admiration and gratitude the

Presidency population exercised only brought into relief the innate reserve and sense of proportion of the Governor. Typical of his replies to the numerous addresses was his reply to Sir Basil Scott at the farewell dinner given at the Crescent Club when Lord Willingdon said: "I know my limitations. I know how much I have left undone, but I can truly say that I have done my best and no man can do more." And again: "I came among you unknown, with no knowledge of India, with no experience in the administration of a great province. How well I remember my first visit among you, the landing at the Apollo Bunder, the plunging into the sea of unknown faces and figures . . . . . And now we have to turn our hands to serious state of things which threaten our Presidency. After five years of considerable prosperity, the hand of fate is lying upon us. I think I must tell you that I tried very hard to induce superior authorities to let me stay on here to see you through this trouble (famine) but was unable to secure their assent." The last year of Lord Willingdon's administration was embarrassed by a hundred difficulties. There was Germany's last but horror-striking death-dance in Flanders and the imperial call to redouble the supply of cannon-fodder. There was the phenomenal rise in commodity prices, the political movement fast heading to a crisis. Nature itself seemed to add to the anxieties; extensive tracts in the province were in the jaws of yawning famine; the Presidency found itself in the stranglehold of influenza. One of the last acts of Lord Willingdon was to preside at a public meeting in



the Bombay Town Hall appealing for funds for famine relief, one of the last public acts of Lady Willingdon was to visit the hospitals crowded with influenza patients, to organise volunteer services conveying medical aid to the door of the people.

This record of work done, difficulties overcome, advance marked, plans laid out—was it, at the outset, all expected? To use a colloquial phrase, at the time of his appointment Lord Willingdon was a dark horse. Even the *Times of India* commenting on the new appointment said cautiously: "The new Governor has not yet made any great figure in public life; but his future lies before him, for he has scarcely reached the prime of life. But his experiences have been those which have produced some of our most successful Indian Governors. He captained the Eton and Cambridge cricket elevens and Bombay has more than a sneaking regard for a good cricketer. He served as aide-de-camp to Lord Brassey in Australia, and has had some ten years in Parliament. With all its defects there is no training at all comparable to the House of Commons. It induces that healthy outlook on affairs, common-sense, humanity and capacity to see other man's views which many of our Indian civilians, despite their admirable qualities, fail to acquire. We shall, therefore, look forward with confidence to the maintenance of the fine traditions of the Presidency under his regime. There seems to be an impression abroad that the delay in filling the appointment has arisen from the fact that it went abegging. We doubt if there is the slightest foundation for it. There are

few more coveted offices amongst the gifts of the Crown. Lord Lamington used to say there was none more desirable." Writing under "Current Topics" the *Times of India* was even more cautious, and opened its paragraph saying: "There is little to say in the career of Lord Willingdon, whose appointment to the Governorship of Bombay is announced to-day, for he has never occupied a prominent position in either official or political life." After more than five years' experience the same journal said: "What this Presidency and the Empire owe to Lord and Lady Willingdon during the war can never be adequately expressed. During the darkest days, His Excellency and Lady Willingdon have borne steadfastly aloft the banner of confidence of the ultimate issue, they have never slackened in their strenuous endeavour to ensure the victorious issue. \* Now the long road is coming to an end, the dawn of victory which illumined the horizon in July is flushing into full sunrise of complete victory."

The embers of the Balkan War had hardly extinguished when Lord Willingdon assumed office of the Governorship of Bombay. On the day of the announcement of his appointment the great Anglo-Indian journal of Bombay ominously said in its editorial: "Until the inner history of the War (Balkan) comes to be written none can realise how near Austria and Serbia came to an open rupture." Within a year of his arrival Europe was in the steel-grip of a more gory combat. He saw the retreat of Allied forces, the enemy within 30

miles of Paris. He saw one powerful offensive after another, the fate of the Empire in balance. Those dark and anxious days were over now. On the eve of his laying down the reins of office newspapers were packed with telegrams announcing the victory of Allied forces. Turkey had already collapsed, Bulgaria surrendered the very day Lord Willingdon left India. On that day for once the German front line was cut into twain. With such news one was inclined to forget the baptism of fire and woes the Empire experienced and the concentrated effort it required to turn the tide of War fortunes. When it is realised that in addition to these War efforts Bombay continued such steady progress in local self-government, agricultural improvement, irrigation, industrial development, co-operative movement, education and social services, balanced opinion is forced to the conclusion that the Indo-British Commonwealth stands for ideals and ambitions for which no empire before it had ever stood, and that Lord Willingdon was one of the greatest and most consistent exponents of those ideals and ambitions.

## AS A NATION-BUILDER

NATION building in India constitutes a series of severely practical and extraordinarily unassuming range of activities. Political movement can have a real value only if it is an outward expression of inward worth. Nationalism may be difficult of precise analysis, and a catalogue of its formal attributes, as Lord Irwin says in "Political India", will not take us very far. Nationality is to a people what personality is to an individual; it is a spiritual quality born of material conditions. Nationalism can therefore be developed through requisite material and moral conditions as personality can be unfolded in given circumstances. Apart from such pre-requisites as common culture and historic traditions, common interests and ideals, ability to sink differences of religion, class, and material interest for common good, national delivery requires a certain minimum standard of education, industrial growth, and civilisation. A population merged in a perpetual struggle for barest existence, its time and energy exhausted in drawing sustenance from nature, with leisure, educa-

tion, and means to outgrow narrow village horizon denied, cannot constitute the best material for lasting nationalism.

On arrival in Bombay Lord Willingdon found agriculture, its greatest industry, engaging 80 per cent. of the population, in a primitive state of existence despite past endeavours at rejuvenation. Implements invented two thousand years ago still held the field, seed was slowly deteriorating, pressure on land steadily increasing, fragmentation of holdings trespassing the law of economic out-turn. These and other factors reduced the peasantry to abject poverty. As shown in the Bombay Banking Inquiry Committee report the total debt of the peasantry had reached the staggering figure of 81 crores, the debt worked at fifteen times and the annual interest charges twice the land assessment; nearly 80 per cent. of the peasant families were in debt handed down from father to son unto the third and the fourth generation. Popular contentment could not subsist long on such foundation; nationalism could not be built of such material. For placing popular harmony and national ideal on a firm footing Lord Willingdon directed his attention to rural indebtedness, since he as his predecessors realised that the luxurious crops, the waving fields, the gorgeous mango groves, the vineyards and the orchards, that delight the heart, the result of the peasants' toil, could not provide the merest to sustenance to the toiling masses if the grip of the money-lender was to continue holding them in subjection.

It was universally acknowledged that the money-

lender sapped the foundation of national prosperity, crippled its main industry and smothered initiative; thriving countryside is the surest guarantee of administrative stability and its best justification. Lord Willingdon set out with a determination and tact the situation required, to face the problem. The money-lender could not totally be dislodged without the accompaniment of wholly unwelcome reactions. He has become part of peasant economy. He supplies credit, provides seeds, meets the requirements of religious rites and marriage festivity demands. A safe method for undermining his domination was found ten years earlier in the co-operative movement and Lord Willingdon headed for it with greater vigour than, perhaps, any Governor before or after him. In the first year of his rule the number of societies in the Presidency proper increased by  $35\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., the membership by  $44\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., working capital by  $36\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. and the profits advanced by 34 per cent.

The path of advance was not smooth. The money-lender hates the co-operator and knows how to keep his prey in grip. There were extraneous difficulties. The bank failure of the previous year, however, left the co-operative movement in tact; it had a strong foundation, for, in later years in spite of the upheaval of the War with consequent distress, financial paroxysms, panics, and fluctuations in trade, run on banks, depreciation in silver, demand for gold, and currency at a discount, the one movement on a steady march of progress was the co-operative movement. The onslaught of the War no doubt

slowed its pace, but only for the first year. The Bombay Administration Report for 1914-15 admitted that in spite of greater "caution in registration" the number of societies increased by 17 per cent. over the previous year, membership by 27 per cent., working capital by 23 per cent. and profits by 30 per cent. In 1915-16 there was an all-round increase of 25 per cent. in the number of societies, their membership, capital and profits; the next year saw further development of 23 per cent. and the same progress was maintained in the last year of Lord Willingdon's administration. Thus during a period of five years the movement expanded by 250 per cent.

It becomes obvious from the reports of various co-operative institutions and journals that the magnificent expansion drew its inspiration from Lord Willingdon who vigorously interested himself in the movement, visited co-operative societies when on district tours, presided over or inaugurated as many conferences as he could, and above all gathered round him a band of young public workers, whom he inspired with the requisite zest for the message of co-operation. Whether co-operation can totally displace the money-lender is doubtful, whether it can completely solve rural poverty is also questionable, but it is indisputably a practical instrument to soften a serious agrarian situation, and by the time Lord Willingdon left the Presidency Bombay had become the Mecca of co-operators from other provinces.

More directly assailing the agrarian lethargy

was the Agriculture Department conducting an unremitting propaganda, within limited Indian conditions, for modern farming methods, more scientific appliances, better seeds and more profitable crops. Agricultural exhibitions became the order of the day, agricultural exhibitions in the Deccan and Konkan, in Karnatak, Gujerat, and Sind, where the peasantry sent its cattle and land produce for healthy competition. Experimental farms were started all over the Presidency, model dairies opened, model villages built. Standing monuments to these efforts are the villages near Poona where new hope and ambition, displacing the philosophy of resignation and stagnation, have been infused. As a lasting reminder of those efforts are the thousands of acres of prosperous fields throughout the Presidency where famine conditions were the rule before, prosperity the exception.

Among the baffling problems of agrarian India one of the most complex is that of uneconomic cattle-farming, for where its solution ought to be sought purely from an economic view-point in other lands, religious injunctions and sentiment defy the endeavours of its scientific handling in this country. Arising out of the agrarian economic necessities of the early Aryan settlers of Bharatvarsha, economists hold that the deification of the cow to-day serves a purpose exactly the opposite for which ages ago sacrosanctity sanctioned it. Considered as the mother of agrarian India, its sight auspicious and its touch spiritually cleansing, the cow due to economic circumstances, is neglected in India to-day as at no other time and in few other lands. Callousness is



certainly not among the responsible causes, for no section of humanity has finer creature-feelings as the simple-minded Indian peasant; the cattle are at once his instruments of sustenance and companions amidst a dull and lonely village life. The remedy for the problem—and its extent can be realised from the fact that the total population of cattle is over 15 crores—is part of the remedy for the general agrarian problem with its Marwari, primitive production methods, excessive land fragmentation, and the peasant philosophy of resignation. The British administrator understands that he cannot entrench on religion and philosophy without rousing the most dangerous resentment, devest the village parasite or attack land fragmentation without converting the country into an armed camp and forging the reforms with the help of an open sword. Lord Willingdon tried less dazzling methods. In addition to the opening of a large number of model dairies where high-bred cattle were sold and methods of scientific cattle-breeding explained, he set a personal example through a cattle-farm of his own for the ready disposal, at reasonable price, of the best breeds in the world. Indian princes and landlords patronised the effort, and if to-day in some obscure corners of the Presidency, in remote Indian States, and out-of-the-way zamindari lands we find cattle that are the wonder of the villagers, a model of human skill, labour, and ingenuity, it is credited to the fact that over fifteen years ago Lord Willingdon gave a practical shape to the desires of the wealthy classes to have the best available breeds for the improvement of indigenous

stock, by himself importing them and making them available to the public. These efforts were admittedly small beginnings for the solution of a great problem, but the fact remains that the landlords and princes who are the natural leaders of the peasantry, have been, through Lord Willingdon, introduced to scientific dairying which is sure to have a lasting effect on Indian cattle-farming. His Highness the Aga Khan recognised the fact in discussing the question in "India in Transition" when he wrote: "Early steps should be taken to study the best mating possible for the native race of cattle in any series of districts owning the same family of cows . . . It is true a few choice breeds exist, and here and there earnest friends of the country, notably Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Bombay have done most valuable service by maintaining special breeds. But these personal endeavours are not in themselves sufficient."

Excessive land fragmentation, due to the ruin of handicraft industry with consequent land hunger, is another of the complex rural problems, but though reformers have been shouting hoarse for remedy, when in the Bombay Legislative Council a measure for its prevention was introduced in 1927, the heterogeneous groups of mofussil members, usually outbidding each other in rivalry, brushed aside their differences to present an impregnable phalanx of opposition, and the bill, pushed unmercifully up to a certain stage, had hurriedly to be withdrawn at the order of the Secretary of State. Any such radical reform, however desirable, would

shake the entire rural economy, and unleash the fury of vested interests in a manner not exactly welcome to any government. Lord Willingdon, more cautious and practical, took a different step for the betterment of the petty peasant. In the second year of his administration an amendment measure was introduced in the Council for increased protection to the inferior holder of land, which, without generating unrest, rendered succour to thousands of tillers of the soil.

The fourth great agrarian problem is that of irrigation for though the South-West Monsoon generally provides a bountiful water supply and great rivers traverse the Presidency, the monsoon generosity is not always guaranteed and lasts only for four months in a year while the great rivers can serve little purpose without the harnessing hand of science. And if peasant well-being is to be assured and land production placed on a sound footing extensive irrigation schemes become absolutely essential. Lord Willingdon continued the task with no creeping feet or blinking eyes, for the striking results of the strenuous endeavour, through the hectic course of the War, are provided in the revealing figures of official reports. In the first year of his career, the expenditure on irrigation advanced by  $15\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs, the total amounting to  $95\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs ; capital expenditure on irrigation works increased markedly on works in the Deccan and Sind ; the area irrigated in Sind and the Deccan now exceeded the average of the preceding three years by 169,000 and 58,000 acres respectively, while the area covered by the Mira Left Bank Canal

in the South of Poona, the largest in Maharashtra, rose from 523,999 in 1912-13 to 766,830 in 1913-14. Three great works, under construction before the arrival of Lord Willingdon, were in one year pushed to the stage nearing completion, and the area under irrigation reached the vast expanse of 3 million acres, constituting a quarter of the total cultivable area in the province.

With the onset of the War the Government of India ordered curtailment of activities not absolutely essential for the regular maintenance of administration, but expenditure on irrigation in the Presidency for the year 1914-15 actually showed an increase over that of the previous year. During this year the Bhandarwara Dam was raised by 20 feet and extensive preparations were made for replacing Lake Whiting Dam by a much larger structure. This could not however continue for long. The War expected to end in less than a year, now featured as a permanent institution. On the Western front the hostile armies were entrenched in the common activity of mutual annihilation and more money was blown up in a single week's struggle than would have been required to build the entire city of London anew. The resources of India had fully to be mobilised and provincial programmes were further cut down. Irrigation, like all other nation-building activities, suffered, big irrigation programmes, already launched, were slowed down, but, to the credit of Lord Willingdon, no provincial government struggled more strenuously to keep and kept as close to the original plans as Bombay. In addition to the

execution of the schemes mentioned above, during this War period, the Godavari Canal works at a cost of Rs. 100 lakhs, as also the Pravara Canal and the Bhandarwara Dam the biggest in the world, were completed. The Mira Left Canal Project was pushed through at great speed, and it was anticipated that after the completion of all the three operations, the area irrigated would cover 2,060,000 acres. Demands of the War were unquestionable, but needs of the peasantry could not be overlooked. Lord Willingdon had his eye more on the lasting welfare of the administration and the Empire, and while, therefore, irrigation programmes elsewhere were curtailed by 50 to 75 per cent. in Bombay they were reduced only by 30 per cent. A more important point, though the actual execution of irrigation works was reduced, Lord Willingdon's administration drew up a comprehensive programme of new and more gigantic works for post-war development. Few seem to be aware that of the huge irrigation works inaugurated by Sir George Lloyd most were actually planned to the last detail by Lord Willingdon's Government.

Education is an essential plank in nation-building; it is the life breath of British Liberalism, and under Lord Willingdon's administration, therefore, Bombay had a record of educational expenditure that excited the cupidity of neighbouring provinces and the envy of outside politicians. The opening year of his term found the Presidency in the happy possession of more money than it knew how to spend. "The expenditure on education continued to increase, and for the first time the total number of

persons under instruction exceeded a million," declared the Administration Report for 1913-14. "The allocation of large grants made by the Government of India in the past years was almost complete, although the actual expenditure of these large sums will necessarily take time." Expenditure on education rose by 6 lakhs in 1913-14, the number of primary schools increased by 5 per cent. but that was nothing compared to the comprehensive programme, foiled by subsequent events, for establishing a school in every village laid out in the first year of his arrival. Frustrated in the attempt to carry out the whole programme, it might be surprising to know that during this war time, when the future of the Empire was in question, the number of primary schools increased by more than a thousand, a scheme was nearly completed whereby all villages with a population of 1,000 and over were provided with a primary school each and a beginning had been made for taking up those with a population of 500 and over. Lord Willingdon's ambition for liquidating illiteracy is gauged from the fact that his ten-year programme of a school in every village has not been completed after a period of over 15 years in spite of the transference of Education to popularly elected ministers and the educational fervour the ministers displayed.

The first year of the War saw an actual increase in the expenditure on primary education by 15 lakhs. More funds were placed at the disposal of local bodies than they could utilise and the Administration Report for 1914-15 observed : "Little pro-

gress was made by local boards in utilising the considerable sums placed at their disposal for building new schools." Illustrative of the rate of progress maintained during the war period is the fact that the number of schools rose by 720 in 1913-14, 643 in 1914-15, 500 in 1915-16, 639 in 1916-17, and 454 in 1917-18. But these schools would perhaps have been worse than useless without an adequate supply of trained teachers and in 1913 there was a famine in this respect. The service had little attraction; prejudice prevailed against women entering the profession; the salaries were low. Lord Willingdon sanctioned a scheme for a training school in every district. A scheme was also laid for training two hundred teachers a year for secondary education. None of the two schemes was completed by subsequent administrations, but that they were planned by Lord Willingdon in the midst of the War shows, if nothing else, his benevolent intentions towards the people he was called upon to rule.

The late Mr. V. J. Patel had declared that the outstanding event in the world of education in Bombay during Lord Willingdon's term was the passing of the unofficial Compulsory Education Bill. The permanent officials were not all in its favour but Lord Willingdon lent his support to it almost in the initial stages, and due to his intervention it was not only passed with the solid vote of the Treasury bench, but Government, of their own accord, amended it to sanction a Government grant of half the expenditure municipalities and local boards would have to bear for introducing compulsion instead of one-third

as provided for originally. The added responsibility was undoubtedly great particularly at that juncture, but it generated such generous goodwill that by this single gesture Lord Willingdon may be said to have taken the wind out of the sails of the growing political unrest and delayed the crisis till well after the anxious period of the War.

It was a general complaint of the time that secondary education had entered into a rut, that initiative and spirit of experiment in the official and non-official world were inadequate, the curriculum unimaginative and torn from the realities of Indian life and conditions. This changed from 1913 onwards. The curriculum was overhauled, new subjects were introduced, new methods tried, new fields explored. In spite of the War the grants-in-aid were continued as before, new secondary schools started, special facilities given to the backward and Depressed Classes and for them special hostels opened. During a period of five years the number of students in secondary schools increased by 25 per cent. More, it was in every sense a better educational system than Lord Willingdon had found it.

The apex of the edifice of instruction is the University. Its products supply the wants of the administration and the leadership in every walk of life. It is very necessary that its guiding principles and policies should coincide with the interests of the Government and public at large. But in Bombay the University and Government were drifting apart; Lord Sydenham's well-meant plans for giving a vocational turn to education were misunderstood; there was grous-



ing and sullenness, friction and clashes behind the veil. What did Lord Willingdon do? Let the *Times of India* under the editorship of Sir Stanley Reed speak: "Lord Willingdon succeeded to a legacy of acute friction between the Bombay University and the Government. That has been swept away; with the able co-operation of Mr. Setalvad<sup>1</sup> a sound working partnership has been established between the University and the Government through the establishment of a Joint Board for the examination of the pupils", and "Lord Willingdon arrived in Bombay when there was a painful tension between the Government and a very large section of the community; the tension disappeared before his invisible generosity, his genuine and active sympathy with all that tended to the good of India, his unfaltering desire to co-operate wholeheartedly with all loyal citizens of the Empire in working honestly and bravely for the advancement of this country."

The appointment of an Indian Vice-Chancellor to the University was but a first step towards smoothing out the University-Governmental relations. Lord Willingdon next invited the leaders of the University for a frank discussion on other crucial questions and the mist of misunderstanding cleared, the University activities expanded. The College of Commerce scheme thought out by that frank-hearted and determined ruler, Lord Sydenham, became a working reality. The Dharwar College, the Willingdon College, the New Poona College, the University

1. Now Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, the well-known Bombay lawyer and Liberal leader.

Extensions, and the Post-Graduate courses, are but a few of the outstanding features of Lord Willingdon's inspiring leadership in matters of University education.

The Indian bourgeoisie naturally looks upon industrial development as an essential nation-building activity. Industries all over the Presidency had experienced a steady expansion during the previous fifty years ; the War gave it a stimulus and Lord Willingdon's Government seized the opportunity further to advance it. A special post of Director of Industries was created with an Advisory Committee to help contemplated new enterprises. This was avowed as clearly a fresh and definite step for fostering national industries, and if for nothing else, Bombay has reason to remember his services for this alone. As Mr. (now Sir) Lallubhai Samaldas said on the eve of Lord Willingdon's departure : "I cannot let this opportunity go without expressing a word of appreciation of Your Excellency and Your Excellency's Government in the case of industries. When the matter came up in 1915 before Your Excellency's Government during the budget debate, Your Excellency approved of the proposal and appointed a small committee. . . . . and within a short time, recommendations of this committee were accepted by Your Excellency and a committee called the Indigenous Industries Committee was created which was given the help of a capable civilian, Mr. Thomas as the Secretary. Thereafter, it was felt that the creation of the post of a Director was best suited to meet the situation. This, my lord, is one of the best

pieces of work done by Your Excellency during the last few years . . . . . Your Excellency has shown a truly national spirit in thus fostering national industries."

• Educated Indian opinion considers the liquor trade obnoxious. Anxious to accommodate enlightened wishes, Lord Willingdon, by a scheme for less consumption of intoxicants combined with more revenue gave prohibition a practical turn. Thus in 1913-14 while Excise revenue rose by 5·6 per cent. and the increase in the income from country spirit was 3·6 per cent. the actual sale of liquor was less than in the previous year. In 1915-16 the monopoly system, which the nationalist press had criticised as open to corruption, extravagant to Government and harmful to people, was finally abolished, and full four distilleries were completely closed down. The total liquor sale was lower during this period than in any of the previous fifteen years. The profits from the monopoly abolition began to increase from 1915-16 and continued for well over ten years. Decreasing liquor sale combined with increasing income secured 31 lakhs more to the Presidency exchequer with less drunkenness. Reduction in the strength of spirit, curtailment in the number of shops, shortening the hours of sale, suppression of illicit distillation, steady enhancement of still-head duty—these marked the stepping stones which later enabled the Government to declare it their settled policy to journey towards the public ideal of total prohibition.

The broad landmarks of Lord Willingdon's administration indicated above mobilised the Presi-

dency harmony and resources in the defence of an Empire that stood for the practical realisation of stirring socio-political ideals. It need hardly be said that they cemented British rule and stabilised its administration, but they were, above everything else, responsible for a strident move forward in the achievement of nation-building started over a hundred and fifty years ago. Whether it be the prince with his injured dignity or the educated middle-class feeling slighted at the rejection of a helpful hand, or the more deep-seated agrarian problems of indebtedness, uneconomic holdings and irrigation, the statesmanlike hand of Lord Willingdon was always working for solution, and thus while ministering to Empire interests he advanced the common weal of his subjects and reinforced loyalty by the only reliable instrument of the steady service of his subjects.

Leaders of opinion privileged to watch Lord Willingdon's work at close quarters and co-operate therein, were decidedly its best judges. The elected members of the Bombay Legislative Council passed a just verdict on his administration in unanimously voting for the resolution: "This Council places on record its high appreciation of the services rendered by His Excellency to this Presidency and its regrets at his leaving it at this important crisis in its political future, and is keenly sensible of the very cordial relations that have always characterised his presidency during the last five years and a half." The Hon. Mr. Parekh in moving the resolution said with reference to Lord Willingdon's War work,

“ To my knowledge hardly a Governor who had to conduct his work under such most difficult circumstances as fell to Your Excellency’s lot to conduct the administration . . . . . So far as your own personal work was concerned, there cannot be the least doubt that for carrying out the measures which would enable to win the War it was necessary that you as the head of the Presidency, should devote your utmost efforts and energies for the successful prosecution of the War. That was your duty and we must say that we have always found that you have discharged it with the greatest ability and that you have devoted the greatest industry and energy towards the discharge of the duty.” The Hon. Mr. P. C. Sethna said: “ Before Your Excellency arrived in our midst in 1913 your reputation had preceded you as a statesman with wide sympathies and possessing a keen insight into the needs of the times. . . . . In the long array of those who have filled the exalted office of Governor of Bombay there are some who occupy a higher and more abiding place in the hearts of the people of this great Presidency and Your Excellency will certainly take rank with the best among them and equally so Her Excellency Lady Willingdon. . . . . Rapid strides have been made in all directions, notably in the advancement of local self-government and education . . . . . The progress would have been yet more marked were it not for the Great War.” The Hon. Rao Bahadur Naik said: “ I am, my lord, one of the members who have had the good fortune of having sat on the Council during the whole period

of Your Excellency's office. . . . . From Your Excellency's memorable incognito visits to the peasant classes, humble co-operative societies even in the remotest corner of the Presidency and mixing with their members, and from the most important part taken by Your Excellency in our recent political reforms your labours show an uninterrupted zeal and continuity. Your Excellency has visited most of our industrial and agricultural corners and is personally acquainted with almost every part of the Presidency." The Hon. Salebhoy Barodawalla summed up the whole administrative policy when he said: "Your Excellency's activities and administration will be characterised as one of the most eventful in the history of the Presidency. . . . . It would be impossible to recount the many beneficial measures, legislative and administrative, during Your Excellency's regime. I can say with confidence that you have earned for Your Excellency the esteem and admiration of all who have followed the events of the last five and a half years. Your Excellency's personality and that of Her Excellency will be long remembered by the people of this Presidency and the great part played by Your Excellency in the new reform scheme will occupy one of the brightest pages in the annals of the history of this country." In the background of these activities was the sky-tearing holocaust of the War, and when that fact is remembered and its implications understood, one is surprised not that Lord Willingdon did not achieve more but that he could do so much.

## SOCIAL UPLIFT WORK

**I**NDIA is a famous old country. The lure of its wealth and glory has made its chequered and cataclysmic career. Inviting trains of successive invaders from the early twilight of history down to the eighteenth century it has absorbed within its life-texture social traits of every invader and built up a life unique. Hallowed by powers spiritual and temporal, the social life of India may rouse, sometimes justly, the admiration of the romantic and inspire the bard to sing its glory ; but in the light of modern social theories, the recognition of fundamental human rights and liberties and the discoveries of the social roots of state power and ecclesiastical authority, it presents itself in a form not always pleasant. Injudicious professors at seats of learning may orate without qualification on the glory that was Ind, but those who believe in a historic Indian paradise of popular prosperity may balance judgment by looking up the careful observations of J. de Laet Leyder, who in 1631 saw that while the elephants of noblemen wore trappings of silver and gold the people did not have

sufficient cloth to cover themselves in winter ; those who picture the phantoms of democracy in the past may profitably go through the heavily-documented digest of contemporaneous authority given in that famous work of W. H. Morland "India at the Death of Akbar" depicting the other side of the medal ; those basking in the reflected glory of ancient institutions and the sanctity of their practices, prohibitions and taboos may usefully peruse Abbe J. A. Dubois' works on the subject and decide how those precepts and practices fit in with the soul-stirring teachings of Mill and Burke, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Marx, they so readily admire and rightly quote on the political platform.

Conditions in the rest of the world, it is true, were no better for the pomp, wealth, and glory in other countries also were confined to the few, the general population was steeped in ignorance, filth, and poverty. Their institutions, the product of the social and economic structure of the time, were however discarded in progressive countries with the progress of modern civilisation ; in India, to her detriment, a large conservative community still worships and glorifies them. One of the tasks of an Indian provincial Governor, therefore, is strenuously but cautiously and diplomatically to fight this tendency and, as a composite part of nation-building with the help of educated opinion, to undermine antiquated and injurious institutions, practices, and beliefs. Social institutions, entrenched behind religious sanctions and receiving their firmans from holy texts, can by no foreign ruler be directly attacked, without rousing opposition



from opposite directions and with opposite motives. In not a few cases the standard-bearer of national freedom and the arch reactionary may join hands in common opposition to social freedom, and faced with such a position, the Indian Governor, often accused by the enthusiastic reformer of moving too slowly, has to perform his enlightened duty, with extreme caution. The delicacy of the job requires that instead of a direct assault on the sanctified relics indirect influences should be set at work. In the following pages we shall see the strength of these indirect influences during the Governorship of Lord Willingdon and their effect on Indian social conditions.

Indian reformers declare that the outstanding issue of the social problem is the caste system, with Untouchability, condemning one-fifth of the Hindu society to the lowest rung of degradation, as its unique feature. Equally vital is the issue of the treatment of women of which again early marriage and compulsory widowhood are the two special aspects engaging the reformer's attention. A special problem among Muslims as among a section of Hindus in Northern India is the purdah system, cramping the life of womanhood and resulting in appalling incident of death rate. The ingenuity with which the orthodox Brahmin maintains ascendancy over the untouchables is illustrated in the scriptural injunction, "whoever is guilty of it (murder of a Brahmin) will be condemned at his death to take the form of one of the insects which feed on filth. Being reborn long afterwards a Pariah, he will belong to this caste, and will be blind for more

than four times as many years as there are hairs on the body of a cow. He can nevertheless expiate his crime by feeding forty thousand Brahmins." Feeding forty thousand Brahmins is good! "Thus at one sweep is explained" says a writer "untouchables existence as such; are justified the indignities heaped upon him; is emphasised his unspeakable degradation; and is safeguarded the oppressor from the wrath of him oppressed." Sir Surendranath Bannerjee aptly says in "A Nation In Making": "When divine sanction, in whatever form, is evoked in aid of a social institution, it sits enthroned in popular heart with added firmness and fixity as to defy all forces of modern civilisation."

Like other enlightened rulers before him Lord Willingdon assailed the problem from various directions but the immediate field open to him apart from such influences as of education, co-operative movement, etc., was the influence of the military avenue. Lord Willingdon pressed successfully for a special Mahar regiment in the Presidency; one such regiment was completely formed and another three-fourths raised before the end of the War; among non-combatants, thousands from the Depressed Classes were accorded special preference and sent out of India. That these thousands, with their vision broadened by foreign travel, brushing shoulders with every variety of people, when back among their villages spread an influence which worked as a powerful ferment, revolutionising the outlook of thousands of others is proved by direct observation. That these among others are the heavy-weight

battering rams, slowly laying orthodoxy in ruins needs only to be mentioned to be accepted. It was Lord Rawlinson who in a most brilliant speech on the floor of the Legislative Assembly once dilated on the nation-building influence of the Military Department and military training. The mental, moral, and physical discipline which thousands of untouchables received in the Army during the War was itself an operative process of regeneration. The habit of discipline, smartness and regularity they imbibed in the Army could not but leave an impress on the villages to which they returned after completion of military service.

Wandering round Mahar quarters you come across a thatched hut, as humble as any in the vicinity, but it has attracted your attention. There is something striking about it. It is scrupulously clean, everything is so neat and tidy ; there is a lusty creeper wandering up the roof, there are plant-pots by the side, not so artistic, perhaps, but certainly evincing a taste for beauty. You see children playing in front of the house, cleaner and healthier than those in the neighbourhood. You wait, out of the hut comes an elderly person, upright, with features that are typical. You recognise him as a retired military man. The hallmark of military training will be handed down from generation to generation. An effective method of uplifting the untouchables, it avoids the growls of the orthodoxy while fulfilling its purpose. How many of the first-class Indian sportsmen, cricketers, hockey players, athletes, have come from the Mahar community in the Indian military! Lord Willingdon rightly evaluated the

nation-building potency of military training for the untouchables and fully exploited the unique opportunity the War afforded. It was a grievance for years that the caste Hindu would not allow the untouchable to enter the preserves of Government service. Lord Willingdon cut the opposition short and recruitment among the untouchables for the Police force was started again. How many untouchables in the Police force to-day, throughout the scores of districts, realise that they are there because the present Viceroy refused to compromise their case ?

The educated untouchable is bound to kick against exploitation and inferior status, and so education is best calculated to undermine the tyrannical structure. A thousand years ago the untouchable was denied the learning of the holy lore as all other learning ; reformers complain that to-day he is terrorised into abandoning the pursuit of modern education. "Speaking generally, it is still the case that the casteman not only does nothing for the enlightenment of the outcaste, but puts positive obstructions in his way, knowing that if he is enlightened he can no longer be exploited," reports the Village Education Committee in Bengal. "Outcastes who have the temerity to send their children to school . . . find themselves subject to such violence and threatening that they yield and withdraw their children." A swift change is now taking place before our eyes, and the Depressed Class Mission files show that not the least among those who have contributed to the awakening were Lord and Lady Willingdon. Special schools for Depressed Class children how many of

them were started while expenditure on education had to be cut to the bone? In the crowded schools of secondary education who more rigorous in the enforcement of rules of admission to the Depressed Class children than the administration of Lord Willingdon? Was there a prize-giving ceremony in a Depressed Class school, a benefit performance in its aid, a ceremony for laying the foundation stone for a new school building—who so eager to accept an invitation as Lady Willingdon? How many Depressed Class unions, associations, co-operative societies owe their existence, inspiration and growth to Lord and Lady Willingdon? It is not necessary to burden this book with details on this or similar other matters for all social reformers readily admit their dynamic influence when in Bombay.

Students of historical materialism prove that man has dominated woman since the establishment of private property; woman became a part of private property, and in some of the civilised countries is treated as such in law to this day. Some women in India as elsewhere in the past rose to incomparable heights, but this in spite of the cramping environment. The double dose of exploitation to which woman was subjected was decreed by dogma and sanctified by interpolated religion. India was by no means alone in singing the virtues of the chain, but most other nations have shattered them by now. To help breaking these chains is an essential step towards social liberation.

Child marriage though not practised among the advanced is regarded as a universal Indian curse

decreed by law spiritual. Basu thought of legislating against it and raised a whirlwind, Patel contemplated a measure and discovered his erstwhile colleagues up in arms, Sarda made a herculean effort and found his act a dud. Marriage, it is true, does not mean immediate married life in India. It does not necessarily imply all the horrid consequences Miss Mayo depicted. Women in India are not machines of reproduction, men are not imbeciles after thirty, Indians have not evolved themselves into a "sub-human race," nor are they a menace to the world. But discounting the excesses of both sides, some ugly facts remain. The broadest considerations of imperial interest require, that no effort should be spared and some risk taken, to wipe them out of existence. Figures of Indian infant mortality would shock those not acquainted with our conditions. Sixty children out of a hundred die within the first year of their precarious existence, mortality at child-birth alone is 5 per hundred as against 5 per thousand in England. The average life-span in India is 23 years, in England it is 46, Australia 55. That Lord Willingdon's administration was well aware of its social duty could be seen from the observation in the Administration Report for 1917-18 : "The mortality in child-birth is appalling and no appreciable reduction in death rate can be looked for until the number of maternity wards is increased and there is at least one in every town of any considerable size." The contemplated scheme to have at least one maternity ward in every town could not materialise, but even during this war period as many as fifty-six maternity

wards were opened in different towns and the moral influence he brought to bear on scores of States is responsible for the facts that practically every State of any considerable size has a maternity ward of its own to-day. If the spectacle is presented in an Indian State, where the light of civilisation hardly shines bright, of a hospital with well laid out gardens, equipped with the latest apparatus and staffed by qualified men and women, nurses trained, smart and scrupulously clean, all forming a striking contrast with surrounding atmosphere it is not always remembered that behind the spectacle was often the influence of Lord Willingdon working for social amelioration.

In the light of modern science of midwifery the "dai" is considered another of our ancient abominations. The village belief—though steadily discarded—that the circumstances of child-birth are attended by evil spirits and the act of delivery an unholy performance is slow to disappear and the expectant-mother is in not a few cases confined to a dingy room, supplied with filthy clothes and handed over to the most ignorant "dai". Is it surprising that child mortality is high? It would have been surprising if it were lower. An enlightened policy necessitates that the "dai" be replaced by the trained nurse, but at the outset of the war-typhoon there was shortage of the latter; the available force was absorbed by the belligerent necessities. Requirements of the community, however, could not be ignored, and so training classes for nurses were started everywhere; the machinery of the women's Council set into motion; special scholarships for students

awarded ; the available accommodation for nurses' quarters increased. The services of the Young Women's Christian Association, the Social Service League, the Seva Sadan and scores of other social institutions were requisitioned, and the endeavour proved so incomparably fertile that within a few years there was a glut in the profession. That trained nurses, despised in the past, are available to-day in every district town, and welcome there, is in no small measure the result of the enlightened action described above. The "dai" was steadily replaced by the trained nurse, the hospital more welcome than the dingy room, for the last year of Lord Willingdon's rule reported a rise of 40 per cent. in the number of cases admitted to the maternity hospitals.

The growth of the nursing profession also brought within range the solution of another problem. Higher caste prestige enjoins compulsory widowhood ; ideally it may have its value ; theoretically, it is a continuation of the property ownership of woman. The social reformer's advocacy of remarriage, barring other considerations cannot constitute a general solution. There are 2,68,00,000 widows in India and not enough husbands to go round. Coupled with child marriage compulsory life of frustration for widows entails hardships which have to be experienced to be understood. "To force widowhood upon little girls is a brutal crime for which we Hindus are daily paying" says Mr. Gandhi, and asks : "And does not the Hindu widowhood stink in one's nostrils when one thinks of old and diseased men of over fifty taking or rather purchasing wives, sometimes, one on top of



another?" Public opinion to-day condemns such marriages, but it counts for little before grim economic facts. Baroda has passed a law against such alliances; the doddering bridegroom has only to cross the borders to set seal on a bargain. Law cannot go over the head of economic demands. "Educate the girls" was Lord Willingdon's slogan, "Get the widow in the nursing and teaching profession." Orthodox India despised nursing, teachers were treated with suspicion. Indian Christians and Anglo-Indians monopolised the former; Hindu women faced a fiery ordeal entering the latter. Lord Willingdon's persistence in the policy of his predecessors coinciding with the War steadily shattered the prejudices; Hindu widows from the highest castes now throng the nursing classes. It is not denied that the practical freedom of woman is only just begun, only the fringe thereof has been touched. But the shackles of widowhood and its economic dependence are breaking under the hammer-blows of these forces. And an economically independent widowhood cannot easily submit to being a joint-family drudge. It is the surest guarantee of the social revolution to come. Lord Willingdon's administrative trend and the ceaseless energy of his distinguished wife, were the powerful levers underneath the citadels of social obscurantism, unostentatiously helping to lay them low.

The Purdah system and early marriage combined result in a high incidence of tuberculosis. "The outstanding feature of tuberculosis mortality in India is a very high death rate among

young females between the age of 15 and 30 ; for each young man that dies sometimes as many as ten girls die during the same age. Some authorities hold that nearly one-fifth of the total deaths in India take place from tuberculosis." The death rate per 100,000 population in England was 354 in 1871, 113 in 1921 and only 93 in 1928 ; in Scotland for the same years the death rate was 373, 122, and 97. Due to insanitary rural and urban residential conditions and low vitality of the population tuberculosis is steadily increasing in India, but quick and amazing results follow sanitary improvements. "In a town like Lyallpur (Punjab) which was laid out thirty-five years ago on generous town-planning lines, only 14 per cent. of the children were affected, whereas in towns like Ahmedabad and Surat as many as 50 to 60 per cent. of the children show signs of the disease." A steady stream of propaganda was conducted in Bombay from 1913 onwards to fight this fell disease culminating in a concentrated campaign in 1917 when every place where men congregate in pursuit of work, study or pleasure, was invaded through meetings, lantern lectures, demonstrations, handbills, and posters bringing home to the masses the enormity of the scourge and the weapons of combating them. The Anti-Tuberculosis League became more vigorous than ever before. Could all this educative action fail to have effect ?

We have but touched the broad aspects of Lord Willingdon's endeavours in respect of various social questions and their solutions. No account of the social reform activities of Lord Willingdon can be

just and adequate without a reference to the powerful personality of Lady Willingdon. In truth, Lady Willingdon more than the Governor, if a comparison is permitted, was the moving spirit behind Bombay's reform movement in 1913-18. The Women's Branch of the War Relief Fund and the Bombay Presidency Women's Council were her exclusive field, and the Women's Council has now attained a reformist reputation that is unassailable. The wide range of its activities and their extreme usefulness have won adoration of the cynic and the sceptic. The Council has become part of Bombay's public life. At its numerous welfare centres women from the factory and the slum come to receive the message of modern science, obtain for their little ones free supply of milk and acquire the methods of rearing bonny babies. The creches it provides for the children of mill workers have given relief to hundreds of women; hundreds of children have been saved from the contaminating atmosphere of the city by-lanes and slumlands and brought up in healthy surroundings in charge of women knowing their business. These activities will continue for generations to come. The inspiration Lady Willingdon has left will see to it.

*IN MADRAS*

*" We started our work on different principles to that of any other province, principles as to which I was gravely warned of the troubles I was laying up for myself as head of the administration. Thanks to the goodwill and evaporation of all, those gloomy prophets have been confounded."*

—LORD WILLINGDON.

*" There have, however, been complaints heard in various quarters that excepting in Madras, the principle of joint deliberation has not been followed by most of the Provincial Governments, and by some it was followed only for a limited time. More than one Minister in Madras has said in his public speeches that Lord Willingdon treated his entire Government as a unofficial Government. The observation has been made that Diarchy succeeded in Madras because it was ignored."*

—SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU.

*" Lord Willingdon, as a constitutional Governor, chose from the non-Brahmin majority in the Council, all the three Indian Ministers who form part of the new provincial Government and preside over the 'transferred' departments. This is one of the startling transformation scene which any of the provincial elections has produced."*

## UNDER DIARCHY

THE Right Honourable Sir Freeman Freeman-Thomas Baron Willingdon of Ratton, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.B.E., assumed the office of Governor of the Presidency of Fort St. George on 10th April 1919. "Lord Willingdon's appointment to the Governorship of Madras after a lengthened tenure of office in Bombay is an exceptional measure" said the Press Bureau announcing the appointment and continued: "It is a source of satisfaction to His Majesty's Government that his ripe experience and knowledge of the country will not be lost to India on the termination of his present appointment."

It was indeed an exceptional measure, for Sir William Medows was the only Governor before this to go from Bombay to Madras, but that was in the days of the John Company and 128 years before the present appointment. Conversely, with a gap of eleven years between his two terms, Lord Elphinstone had been transferred from Madras to Bombay. Commenting on Lord Willingdon's appointment, the *Times of India* prophetically said: "No Governor

of Bombay has become Governor-General as yet, but there are two instances of the rulers of Madras living to rule over India. Lord Willingdon is a little over fifty and he may yet, after putting in a few years at Madras, be transferred to Delhi and Simla."

Socially and historically, Madras differs markedly from Bombay. Madras came under British rule while Bombay was still a Portuguese possession. It was a fully developed British Presidency while the glory of the Peshwas was still at its height in the Deccan. The siege of Arcot took place full seventy years before the battle of Kirkee and the downfall of Raghoba. Education here is more advanced; in almost every other respect Bombay leads the way. It thus provides a paradox. Its industrial evolution is still elementary, market value of education low, the standard of life borders on the barest existence, social life is cramped, the caste system rigid, orthodoxy powerfully entrenched. Muslims form the smallest minority here and the least militant, but Brahmin-non-Brahmin relations are acute and the condition of the Depressed Classes shocking beyond description. The features of the Brahmin sometimes reveal a strong mixture of Dravidian with Aryan blood. How the highly intellectual Brahmin of the South came to be such a fanatical exponent of the caste system of another race is a mystery, but that he preserves and dominates it with all the force of his resources is reflected in the storm-centre it has become to-day of temple-entry agitation. Temples here are among the most beautiful in India, and endowed with

enormous wealth. With such wealth in hand, the priestly authority defies intruders and resists reforms with might and main. Hinduism here has absorbed many of the gods and goddesses of the original inhabitants, fetish worship and polyandry are not unknown and the problem of "devadasis" is most virulent. While the good things of life are denied to the flock, to be rewarded hereafter for life virtuous and clean, the priest keeps his hand firm on the cash and passes his time, none too crowded, in devotion of the kitten-eyed maidens from the coast-line and the buxom girls of the Nilgiris.

Industrially, Madras has none of the prototypes of Bombay, Ahmedabad, Sholapur and Karachi. Thus the very basis of modern progress is, to say the least, extremely weak. The port of Madras stands below all the important seaward towns of the Western Presidency. Advancing education combined with retarded industry has resulted in a garrulous political intelligentsia and in abasing the standard of living that defies competition. The Madras typist has become notorious, not always justifiably, in Bombay and elsewhere for professional black-legging. South Indian labour has created a perplexing situation in distant Africa.

Madras in 1919-24 was different from Bombay in 1913-18. The aftermath of the War resulted in worldwide chaos and the entire economic system was in for a crash. Russia had already gone Red; Germany threatened to follow suit; Italy went headlong for Communism and was salvaged by Mussolini; Turkey had finished with the Sultan and



the Khalif. The most powerful Crowns of Europe lay in the dust. The wave was bound to strike India.

The economic consequences of the War, pressing heaviest on the agriculturist and the lower middle class, were sure to affect the political situation and aggravate the rising nationalist surge, but a solid phalanx of moderate leadership fought tooth and nail the measures introduced to stem the approaching hurricane. The bill itself became the lever for a more widespread assault on the ruling authority. The Rowlatt Act became the spear-head of attack. The movement spread with the rapidity of a prairie blaze but before Lord Willingdon left Madras authority was firmly seated in the saddle and jockeyed the country with bridle and spur. In Bombay, Lord Willingdon commenced his administration amidst an atmosphere of comparative peace; in Madras at the height of a subversive campaign of an unparalleled magnitude. In the interval between his departure from Bombay and assumption of office at Fort St. George, the entire political situation had been revolutionised.

Lord Willingdon went to Madras with the reputation and experience of a successful administrator of a great Indian province to face a revolution. At home with the job, he plunged headlong into it. Imperial experience shows that the best remedy against political discontent is to remove its basic causes and so on the constructive side, the persistent nationalist demands of the previous decade were conceded in a single year. The Madras District Municipalities Act, effectuating the recommendations of the Royal

Commission on decentralisation, the Elementary Education Act, compelling municipalities and local boards to admit half free poor students from the backward communities, the Panchayat Act, authorising formulation of Panchayat Courts with civil and criminal jurisdiction and composed wholly of elected members, the Town Planning Act for stricter regulation of town development, the Children's Act, protecting the neglected child and the delinquent street-boy—all these measures, it is observed from reports, were in active operation by the end of the first year of Lord Willingdon's rulership. In the background of this consolidative activity was the Non-co-operation Movement, roaring through the land. In the distant Punjab occurred the tragic episode of the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre that was to echo and re-echo down the land for months and years to come. In Bombay, Ahmedabad and Viramgam occurred extensive rioting followed by the declaration of Martial Law in the latter two places. Madras was not so turbulent.

Madras was lucky in other respects ; harvests in 1919 were good, trade prosperous, Government exchequer, after a breach of five years, balanced. The aggregate volume of sea-borne trade during the first nine months of the official year, showed an increase of Rs. 276 lakhs over the same period for the previous year. The war-period famine in shipping tonnage had disappeared, the exchange rate was high, insurance rates for shipping had fallen normal, the War restrictions on export trade were removed. Imports expanded by Rs. 516 lakhs or 55 per cent. over the previous year, exports declined by Rs. 448 lakhs, a

sure sign of people's increasing spending power. Industrial development was fostered under official patronage, the Fisheries Department was started under direct Government control. Schemes for a fisheries college, steam trawlers and marine aquarium were receiving serious consideration and in the same year, under the encouraging support of Lord Willingdon, paper manufacturing mills, glass manufactories and leather tanneries were established. It will be readily deduced from the fact that eight years after Lord Willingdon's departure the Presidency could not go far beyond these achievements, that these development activities were more energetic than is apparent from the catalogue of dry facts. As to-day, his Government was not loath even then to take the best from the Non-co-operation programme. Khadder was an important plank of the Congress movement, and Lord Willingdon gave it a correct turn through investigations for the scientific improvement of the spinning wheel and the weaving machine and through the peripatetic parties sent out to save the industry crippled under the sledge-hammer of modern machinery. Because of relief from financial pressure, extensive building schemes for educational and medical purposes, schemes for extending water supplies and drainage system in the principal towns of the Presidency were sanctioned and effected in 1919-20. Imposing hospital buildings were put up at Rajapuram, Vizagapatam and Kanool; comprehensive investigations were commenced on the water resources of the Presidency, especially in Vizagapatam and Madura Districts; irrigation works in Tolundur, Mopad, and Kaneyapalaiyam were

accelerated under the personal direction of Lord Willingdon. Expenditure on public works rose from Rs. 50.94 lakhs in the previous year to Rs. 65.10 in 1919-20. A feature of these developments that would strike economists was that they were engineered with such scrutiny as to prevent repetition of the scandalous story enacted in Bombay at the same time, and if the financial position of Madras is claimed to be sounder to-day than that of Bombay, whose resources have been mortgaged for years to come on the Back Bay bungle—it is because of the cautious yet progressive conduct of Lord Willingdon's Government during those years of plenty.

At the height of the Non-co-operation movement, when the premier nationalist organisation had declared for the boycott of Government-aided schools and colleges, Lord Willingdon's administration, alive to its charge, vigorously headed its educational programme. In the first year of the administration, no less than 543 new elementary school buildings were constructed, and to help the local bodies involved in financial distress, funds were granted on an extraordinarily generous scale, medical inspection of school children was made compulsory, four new secondary schools for girls and three teachers' training schools were started and preparatory classes were instituted in all training schools designed for general education to women to enable them, especially the higher caste widows, to take up teaching as a profession. A new school for engineering was opened at Trichinopoly and a provincial educational service, first of its kind, was constituted for women. The number of public educational

institutions rose by 140, their strength by forty-three thousand. The number of elementary schools increased by over a thousand—and this in the midst of a campaign claiming it a duty to boycott public educational institutions. The co-operative movement, meant to deliver the peasantry from perpetual indebtedness, was urged on in Madras with the same vigour as in Bombay and the total number of societies increased by 1,400, from 3,676 to 5027. The roots of peasant discontent were thus slowly being sapped.

The reformed constitution was now operative. The Bill was passed at the end of 1919 and the elections for the new legislature were over by the end of 1920. The Madras Legislative Council was inaugurated in January 1921 by His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught. It is admitted that no Governor had pressed for the reforms more strenuously than Lord Willingdon and none now made a greater success of their objective. It was no empty phrase-mongering when Lord Willingdon, requesting H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught to open the Council, remarked: "The new constitution which Your Royal Highness is about to inaugurate admits the elected representatives of the people of India for the first time to share in the Government of the country, and we recognise in it the foundation upon which will be raised in the years to come the completed edifice of our constitutional freedom, as a full partner in the fortunes of the Empire. We pray that under God's providence the labours of this, the first popular elected Assembly to be constituted in India, may with the full co-operation

of all classes and creeds of His Majesty's subjects, lead ever more and more to the prosperity and development of our Presidency, to the peace, contentment and happiness of its people, and to strengthening of the bonds which bind us to the British Empire."

The Congress which had worked more than any other party for political responsibility boycotted the elections. The Non-Brahmins had a field day at the poll and came out with a swamping majority. They were suspicious of the Reforms, they feared rehabilitation of the Brahmin oligarchy. The elections confounded the evil prognostications and as Sir Valentine Chirol said in "India Old and New," "They (the non-Brahmins) can hardly have foreseen how great their opportunity was, for they regarded the reforms at first with deep suspicion as calculated merely to transfer substantive powers from a British to a Brahmin bureaucracy, and so deep was their dread of Brahmin ascendancy even in the new Councils that they clamoured to the very end for a much larger number of seats than the sixteen that were ultimately reserved as "communal" seats for the non-Brahmin electorate. They never needed such a reservation, for they actually carried the day in so many of the "general" constituencies that out of ninety-eight elected members of the new Provincial Council only fourteen are Brahmins, and it is the Brahmins now who complain, not without reason, that their representation falls short of their legitimate influence in the State and are already demanding a reservation of "communal" seats for their own caste in future."

It was Mr. Montagu's intention that though pro-

vincial departments were divided into "Reserved" and "Transferred" subject in their actual working the two halves should function together, and supporting the motion for the second reading of the Government of India Bill in Parliament on 5th July 1919 he said: "If reserved subjects are to become transferred subjects one day, it is absolutely essential that during the transitional period, although there is no direct responsibility for these, there should be opportunities of influence and consultation. Therefore although it seems necessary to separate the responsibility, there ought to be every room that you can possibly have for consultation and joint deliberation on the same policy, and for acting together for the purposes of consultation and deliberation, as the Bill provides, in one Government." In the opinion of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru the only province in which "Diarchy" succeeded most effectively and the spirit of the constitution observed most full-heartedly was in Madras, and he stated in his work "The Indian Constitution," "Now, it may be asked, how far this principle of joint deliberation has been carried out in practice in the various Provincial Governments in India? It is difficult to speak with any degree of certainty about this matter, as the internal proceedings of the Government are not open to the public gaze. There have, however, been complaints heard in various quarters that excepting in Madras, the principle of joint deliberation has not been followed by most of the Provincial Governments, and by some it was followed only for a limited time. More than one Minister in Madras has said in his public speeches

that Lord Willingdon treated his entire Government as a unified Government. The observation has been made that Diarchy succeeded in Madras because it was ignored." Montagu had also emphasised the need for encouraging the appointment of non-official secretaries to Ministers, and according to Sir T. B. Sapru only in Madras was it fruitful, for, as he says in "Indian Constitution," "Provision is also made in this chapter for the appointment of non-official Council Secretaries. How far the experiment has been tried or has succeeded is another matter calling for inquiry. It seems that the experiment was quite successful in Madras and Council Secretaries were found to be of great service to the Ministers."

Proceedings of the Madras Council provide scores of illustrations proving the broad-visioned liberal spirit in which the reformed constitution was worked. We shall quote only two striking instances showing how public opinion, as voiced through the elected representatives, was freed from official influences and effectively moulded Government conduct. On 1st April 1921 Dewan Bahadur Mr. Krishnan Nayar moved that "the qualifications which entitle men to vote be made applicable to women". The Raja of Ramnad seconding the resolution in a humorous speech said: "In my family a very strict gosha system prevails and therefore I rise to second the resolution most heartily because I do not think that, that ought to be a matter which should prevent the giving of this franchise to women. A lawyer friend of mine has told me that under the General



Clauses Act and under the Evidence Act man includes women. I came across an inscription, relating to Uttaramerur Chaturvedamangalam, I think in Tanjore district, from which I learnt that women even a thousand years ago were serving on several committees such as Garden Committee, Tank Committee, etc. If this is so I fail to see why they should not be made eligible now with the advance of education and liberal views in the twentieth century." Where conservative opinion had progressed so far Lord Willingdon's Government decided in accordance with the Montagu constitution to leave the issue to non-official vote and the Hon. Sir Lionel Davidson declared on behalf of Government, "It is the opinion of Government that it would not be right that any official influence should be exercised on the course of debate on this subject. If therefore any member of the Government including any Minister or any servant of Government or any Council Secretary should wish to speak or vote, he is entirely at liberty to do so on the understanding that no official influence shall thereby be exercised". The resolution was carried, 47 voting for and 13 against.

To give another instance, on 3rd August 1921 Dewan Bahadur Mr. Krishnan Nayar moved that "this Council recommends to the Government that they may be pleased to represent to the Government of India the necessity for getting the Bill to amend the Special Marriage (Act III of 1872), introduced by Dr. Gour in the Legislative Assembly on the 23rd March 1921, be passed into law at an early date". The Hon'ble Sir Lionel Davidson declaring the

attitude of Government towards the resolution said, "Our attitude is one of strict neutrality. We look upon the measure as a private Bill brought in by a private person, the fate of which must depend on the votes of private members in the Legislative Assembly. Equally must the fate of this resolution depend on the votes of private members in this Assembly." The resolution was carried, 54 voting for and 23 against the resolution, nine remaining neutral. All the ministers voted for the resolution and the Executive Councillors remained neutral.

In strict accordance with parliamentary practice, Lord Willingdon got the leader of the majority party to form a ministry. In strict accordance with the spirit of the Constitution, the "transferred" and the "reserved" halves of the Government functioned as a whole. Sir Valentine Chirol, than whom there was no shrewder observer of the political situation, frankly remarked in the work quoted above: "Lord Willingdon, as a constitutional Governor, chose from the non-Brahmin majority in the Council, all the three Indian ministers who form part of the new Provincial Government and preside over the "transferred" departments. This is the most startling transformation scene which any of the provincial elections has produced. The non-Brahmins have got the chance which they long claimed. If they rise to the occasion, deal with the Brahmins more fairly than the latter dealt with them, and remembering the struggle they have had for their own emancipation, help the 'untouchables' to rise in their turn out of the degradation to which centuries

of Brahmin domination have condemned them, the reforms may prove to have been perhaps as important a landmark in the moral regeneration of Hindu society as in the development of the Indian body politic". For the first time for a century the non-Brahmins were in the seat of the ruler and it must be said to their credit that they came very nearly—if not entirely—up to the hopes and expectations expressed by Sir Valentine Chirol. The great schemes sanctioned during the period for the betterment of the aborigines and the Depressed Classes are a monument to their impartial use of power under the supervision of a great Governor.

It is universally admitted that Lord Willingdon, setting out to make the constitution a real advance over the pre-reform status and to counter-balance the admitted drawbacks of a transitional machinery, utilised every legal proviso to permit a free scope for the play of popular opinion. "It will have been observed that I have reduced the number of nominated officials to a very low limit," said Lord Willingdon addressing the Council on 14th February 1921, "this is an experiment which I am fully aware will place a great strain on Executive Councillors and Ministers owing to the fact that they will not have as before the support of the official experts to assist them in the debate, and I must express my thanks to them all that as far as possible they readily agreed to this arrangement. But it will also put a greater responsibility on non-official members for the conduct of the course of the discussions. From the experience I have gained here of the work of the Legislative

Council in the past, I am fully confident that this experiment will prove a success and that under the guidance of your President the work of this Council will be carried out in a thoroughly satisfactory and parliamentary manner."

The experiment was as daring as it was novel and after more than a year's experience, Lord Willingdon was able to say in the Council on 27th March 1922: "I think we may all feel that the good ship 'Reforms' has fairly successfully completed her maiden voyage, and though I think we have discovered already that certain alterations in her structure require to be made in order that she may prove to be a more seaworthy vessel, still the skipper can truly say that he would have found the difficulties of navigation much greater if it had not been for the loyal and devoted work of the whole of the crew." Proroguing the Council on 3rd April 1923, Lord Willingdon could truly gauge the result of his experiment and gave a correct verdict when he said: "We started our work on different principles to that of any other province, principles which were much criticised at the time, principles as to which I was gravely warned of the troubles I was laying up for myself as head of the administration. Thanks to the goodwill and co-operation of all, those gloomy prophets have been confounded."

Madras was in the throes of intense labour trouble in 1919-20, there were riots and firing, but the situation was well handled, and addressing the Council on 14th February 1921, Lord Willingdon enunciated his abiding faith in the establishment of

Labour-Capital harmony which came as a surprise to those who had been advocating the steel fist for labour. "It is a matter of keen satisfaction to the Government and I am sure to every member of the Council, that the protracted labour dispute at the Buckingham Mills which has caused so much misery and distress to thousands of workmen and their families has been settled. Let me add in this connection that while it is true that at the present time the world is passing through a serious financial and economic depression, I am sanguine enough to believe that before long this country will be enjoying a period of considerable industrial advance. With the lessons we can learn from the experience of the most highly developed industrial countries, I trust that we shall always realize that the employer who brings the money and management into any venture, and the workman who supplies the labour, which are the two main factors to ensure its success, should not be in continual antagonism to each other, but should work in the closest co-operation to secure the prosperity of any industrial project. This may seem to many, an impossible ideal to attain, but I am certain that if employers and employed could establish the relation of confidence and partnership, we shall hear little of these labour troubles which have caused us so much anxiety during the past two years."

In spite of the endeavours at acquiring constitutional equability, the Government was harried by a hundred woes outside its control. The Meston award had done but little justice to the province, the non-co-operators kept on teasing, the Moplahs went mad,

trade was sinking, balancing the budget looked more difficult than the rope trick. "It is no exaggeration to say that no Government could have been faced with greater difficulties on its accession to power" said the Madras Administration Report in 1921-22.. "In addition to financial stringency which was partly a legacy of the War and the necessity which the rise in prices imposed of increasing salaries all round, and partly as a result of the settlement by which this Presidency has to contribute a very large proportion of the revenues to the Central Government, the new Government were met and hampered at every turn by the activities of the non-co-operators." The revival of the Non-co-operation Movement coincided with the financial crisis. Prosperous budgets expired with the expiry of the Morley-Minto Reforms ; the post-war boom period was over and the exchange ratio was brought down with a crash. The Instrument of Instruction charged the Governor with responsibility for the financial security and probity of the province under his control, and true to his duty, Lord Willingdon, in the official year 1921-22, effected retrenchment to the extent of Rs. 71 lakhs, and further, to balance the budget, bills enhancing Stamp Duties, Court Fees and Village Officers Cess were placed before the Council. Only the first two of these were passed by the Council, but Lord Willingdon refused recourse to certification. By the rejection of one of the taxation bills, the net estimated deficit increased from Rs. 22.48 lakhs to 42.05 lakhs. The official demand for reduction in the contribution to the Central Government was

peremptorily rejected. Yet the work of consolidation had to be continued, for the reformed Council with a howling electorate behind, clamoured for rejuvenating the nation-building departments.

The Religious Endowments Bill, introduced in response to reform view, calling upon temple authorities to show up their worldly wealth and account for it, proposed the constitution of special boards to supervise and control religious endowments ; but a wave of orthodox opposition swept over the Presidency, for it was sacrilegious that a "foreign" Government should inquire into the monetary affairs of a religious people, and next year the bill had to be withdrawn and a new one with drastic changes could later be passed with difficulty. Is it any wonder that priests of all nations fight to the last to maintain their dominion ? There is so much wealth behind it.

Right through the financial stringency and the collapsing Congress movement the endeavours of national reconstruction continued unabated. The Advisory Committees on Education, Excise, Forest, Industries, Fisheries, Agriculture, Co-operation, Local Boards, Municipalities and Public Health, appointed by Lord Willingdon's Government to keep in close touch with popular thought-trend and to illuminate public leaders on administrative difficulties became, in due course, a vital machinery for taking public pulse. With the introduction of the Elementary Education Act, Government formed a number of District Education Committees, and the inspection agency, which had outlived its utility, was reorganis-

ed and infused with new life. Vocational and manual training classes were opened in many of the primary schools, the transfer of educational control to local boards was accelerated, the bill for the re-organisation of the Madras University widening the electorate and granting greater powers to the Senate was passed; a scheme for a separate Telegu University was framed by Government and in later years matured into the great Andhra University. In addition, Lord Willingdon through his Council address announced that a Housing Bill of a general character, a special Housing Bill for industrial classes and a comprehensive scheme for maternity benefit for the poorer classes were under Government deliberation. The Irrigation Bill seeking to deal equitably between landlord and tenant to which we shall refer later again in the chapter and the Madras Estates Land Bill gave Lord Willingdon's Government many anxious moments, and the former had ultimately to be withdrawn and a fresh bill sent in with drastic changes because vested interests refused to reach upto the requirements of modern spirit. The Madras City Tenants' Protection Bill, restraining profiteering landlordism was, despite opposition in the capitalist press, forced through the Council, the State Aid to Industries Bill was presented and lastly, "under the direct personal guidance of His Excellency the Governor", by well thought-out retrenchment, the Presidency was restored to balanced finance.

On the political front the Non-co-operation Movement was all but exhausted; but, paradoxical as it may seem, the peasantry was seething with unrest.



In Guntur the agriculturist entered on a strong no-tax campaign and the movement was rapidly overflowing into other districts. The dual policy, so much in evidence to-day, was also at that time characteristic of Willingdonian administration, for along with such defensive measures as strengthening the police, the despatch of military force to spots of affection and the use of legal machinery against agitation, Government sanctioned, where grievances were genuine, liberal concessions in land-revenue, opened schools, built wells and tanks, constructed cart roads, erected free dispensaries so as to trench on agrarian root trouble and help construct a happy rural life.

Soon after Guntur subsided, the Krishna valley threatened to break into a blaze. A spasmodic spark among the semi-civilised tribes of Gudam Hills threatened, under the inspiration of Aluri Shri Rama, to spread rebellion throughout the hilly tracts, and to over-shadow the earlier Moplah outburst. As usual in these cases, police stations were the first target of attack, guerrilla warfare, their maturer development. With the experience of the Moplah Rebellion behind them, the authorities took the most rapid steps to circumscribe the blaze. The measures devised and carried out were prompt and effective, while opportunities for making political capital out of the affair in the press and on the platform were non-existent.

The opening of the official year 1921-22, found the Moplah Rebellion still smouldering. The withdrawal of the Martial Law left the military yet in occupation of the territory and the last important leader was arrested as late as August—nine months

after the outbreak. The Martial Law was replaced by the promulgation of the Malabar (Restoration of Order) Ordinance, the special criminal courts set up to deal summarily with the rebel cases were retained and large powers sanctioned for the civil authorities for restoring harmony in that blood-sodden land. The Malabar Completion of Trials Ordinance was promulgated in August and at the end of six months the Council voted the Completion of Trials Act. Thus with the backing of constituted representatives Lord Willingdon renewed tranquillity and planted the province on the path of civilisation and progress, and it is significant that in the drastic measures he took to give the rebellion a quietus, Lord Willingdon, with his hand well on the popular heartbeat, carried every sober section of current opinion along with him.

The process of reconstruction—the other side of dual policy—proceeded hand in hand. Over ten lakhs of rupees were distributed by Government as loans, which in fact were rarely recovered, for village distress relief. “It was for a long time difficult to persuade the Hindu inhabitants, and especially the large landholders, of the affected area to trust themselves in the villages from which they had fled”, recorded the Administration Report of the Presidency, but the Government with the help of the Servant of India Society and Mr. G. K. Devdhar achieved rural reconstruction with remarkable swiftness and placed public peace on a sounder foundation.

Relations between the Council and Lord Willingdon's Government continued cordial throughout these

troubled times, and the speeches delivered when Lord Willingdon presented the presidential chair to the Legislative Council were typical of the entente. With evident pleasure, Lord Willingdon noted the progress made by Council member in performance of their duties and responsibilities and struck a personal note when he said: "I think I may claim, Sir, that both she (Lady Willingdon) and I—perhaps I in a greater degree than she—have some hereditary right to present this chair to any Legislative Council; for, as you are all aware, she claims for her father, a gentleman, a great imperial citizen, who lived long years doing Parliamentary work in both Houses of Parliament and held high offices in the State and in His Majesty's Cabinet. I think my claim is still greater, for I can call to my mind in my youth, the time when my grandfather, Speaker Brand was Speaker of the House of Commons, and, therefore, I can truly say I was brought up under the shadow of the Speaker's chair. Now, Sir, this ceremony calls certain interesting things to my mind and very particularly the fact that I have had the honour and privilege which I think few Governors have had of presiding over Legislative Councils for seven years during my life in India . . . . I can recollect the time when it was not unusual for honourable members to circulate a printed document to both the President and every honourable member of the House and then come down to the House and read that pretty document to honourable members. Now it is unusual, indeed, I think it is rather infrequent, for honourable members to bring down a carefully typewritten document and

read it with solemnity to honourable members of the House. Now, Sir, I realise the enormous advance that has been made in that matter in Legislative Councils when I sit up in that gallery, for I find that all your proceedings are carried out with all the customs and habits of Parliamentary procedure in the House of Commons. Now, Sir, with that recollection in my mind may not I say that I have full belief that this gift of ours may be to you a further stepping stone to reach that goal that is promised to you under the reforms, that this chair may be casting a shadow of the events which may be coming to you before many years are over? . . . . It is our sincere hope that in future years the honourable members present and those who succeed them may call to mind, by the fact of this gift of the chair, the memory of two people who, great as their mistakes might have been, and many as their faults might have been, have tried honestly, sincerely and devotedly to help forward the progress, prosperity and welfare of your country."

In finally proroguing the first Legislative Council elected under the reforms, Lord Willingdon went over the difficulties his Government had in getting through certain important measures like the Hindu Religious Endowments Bill and the Irrigation Bill. It was due to the absence of enlightened Irrigation Law that the Presidency was so meagrely provided with irrigation and so many great schemes were held up, but vested interests were suspicious of the measure and threw it out. Lord Willingdon did not certify it, but conscious of the great necessity of such a law, introduced a fresh bill in the second Council, succeeded in getting

it enacted and thus opened the path for the gigantic progress in the Presidency irrigation during the past decade. The opposition aroused by the Religious Endowments Bill, defeated by the Council, provides another illustration of how carefully the administrator has to tread when dealing with social legislation, and we make no apologies for quoting at length from Lord Willingdon's speech referred to above to show the difficulties and achievements of the first reformed Council.

"When opening the first Legislative Council on 14th of February 1921, I gave a brief sketch of the legislation we had then in contemplation. In the first place, I referred to the great legislative output of the year 1920, especially in matters relating to local self-government, and mentioned that it was probable that some time would be taken in ensuring the satisfactory working of the new Acts which had just been brought into force. I was a truer prophet than I thought, for I fear that the introduction of the satisfactory working of these Acts has imposed a far greater burden than most of us realised upon my Hon. colleague, the First Minister, who has already carried through the Council in the course of two years no less than seven measures and has two more awaiting introduction. Of the further measures contemplated in his Department the proposed Housing Bill has never taken shape, but we have introduced in its place the Madras City Tenants' Protection Act passed in 1921. . . . . We have also passed into law the Madras Cattle Diseases Amendment Act, the Survey Act, the Port Trust Amendment Act and

ten miscellaneous Acts of minor importance, and the very important Bill dealing with Hindu Religious Endowments has now been added to the list. In addition, my Hon. colleagues the Second and Third Ministers, have devised and carried the very important Acts dealing with State Aid to Industries and the University. So much for what we have done, and I think I may say in passing it is no mean list of legislative achievement for a new Council in the first two years of its existence. . . . We have been unable, for reasons of which the Council are well aware, to make any progress with the Madras Revenue Settlement Bill. We have prepared and ready a Bill to deal with the vexed question of landlord and tenant, but the experience of other provinces in this matter and the very large amount of legislation we have had in hand during the last session have deterred us from introducing it until we have tested it from every point of view and have time for a thorough discussion of it in the Council, to make any progress with another Bill of equal importance, embodying in it certain operative provisions of long-standing existing law, others that had stood the test of experience in other provinces, others that formed part of a private member's Bill and others again that were necessary to clarify the law in view of conflicting decisions of the courts. . . . . But my hopes were not fulfilled and the Bill was rejected by an overwhelming majority consisting not only of the Leader of the opposition and those who generally act with him, but also non-official members from the various communities and interests who sit in all parts of this Chamber,

including most of the Ministerial majority. . . . . I might have applied my certificate but I decided against this course of action for I have always endeavoured in my relations with the Legislative Council, to refrain from using such residuary power. . . . . I have to inform the Council that, after full discussion with the whole of my Cabinet, we have unanimously resolved to take an early opportunity to bring a fresh Irrigation Bill for the approval of Hon. members. Every care will be taken by my Hon. colleague Mr. Ramaswami Ayyar,<sup>1</sup> who will be in charge of the measure, to give all the interests concerned the fullest opportunity of giving their views and opinions before the Bill is introduced, and every endeavour will be made to meet as far as possible all criticisms without surrendering what cannot but be regarded as the essential principles necessary for any Irrigation Bill. The passing of such a measure has for years been considered most urgently necessary for the promotion of the interests of our agricultural population. . . . . Another matter in respect of which our conditions are not so satisfactory as I could wish is that of the work to improve the condition of the labouring population and the elevation of the poorer classes. At the time when I opened the first session of the Council, labour disputes were much in evidence and we were considering whether we should introduce legislation relating to strikes and unions, for the better organisation of maternity aid and for the housing of

1. Now Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar, Advocate-General and Home Member in Madras during Lord Willingdon's administration, for some time Law Member of the Government of India, delegate to the Round Table Conference and adviser to Travancore Government.

industrial labour. Since then, however, the scene has shifted. Labour disputes are, I am glad to see, for the time being at an end. . . . . At the same time, a great deal of interest has been concentrated on the condition of Indian labour abroad. . . . . But I want in all seriousness to ask two questions of Hon. members in order to put the position as I see it clearly before their minds. Is it altogether honest on our part to insist on these regulations for our labourers from other Governments unless we are determined to secure equally favourable conditions for all workers in our own Provinces? Can we with any justice demand that fair and equal treatment which we all agree should be given to Indians in other parts of the British Empire, if we do not put our own house in order and insist on securing similar treatment for all our citizens within our own borders? I am speaking very frankly, for I feel very strongly that conditions of labour in parts of our province are so bad that they demand urgent and drastic remedy. Government have endeavoured in the past, and will continue their efforts to improve the prospects in life for these poor people, but to ensure complete success we require the whole force of public opinion behind us. I, therefore, appeal to every Hon. member of this Council for the credit of our Presidency, I go further and say for the sake of humanity, to rouse the public opinion in order that we may all ensure that every employer of labour shall be forced to undertake his full responsibility for the fair treatment and well-being of his workmen, and that the labourer shall secure all those advantages at home which we



have been so eagerly working to secure for him when he leaves his country to work for employers in countries overseas."

Explaining the certification of certain items of the budget specially regarding the item for the administration of Agency districts created under the Reforms for the progress of aboriginal tribes, Lord Willingdon said :

"With regard to my certification of the amount required for the Agency, a perusal of the discussion on the motion by which the demand for the Agency was reduced by five lakhs leads me to believe that the object of Hon. members who voted for this reduction was to bring about the abolition of the separate Agency division and the restoration of the system of administration in force before 1920. But this change, if carried out, would not by itself result in any such saving as is represented by five lakhs of rupees, and from information I have received I am clear that the effect of accepting the reduction could only be to reduce the general expenditure in the Agency to a standard below that which prevailed before the Agency division was constituted. To effect a saving of five lakhs of rupees it would be necessary not only to stop all progress but even to abandon the maintenance of existing communications, to reduce dispensaries and medical services, to close down the activities of the Veterinary and Co-operative Departments and to make a heavy reduction in the scanty educational facilities which now exist. His Imperial Majesty's Instrument of Instructions issued to me as the Governor of this Presidency

pecially imposes upon me the duty of making due provision for the advancement and social welfare of those among the people . . . who need special protection, and I should be failing to carry out this command if I permitted such a reduction in the provisions for the Agency as would involve not only the abandonment of all advancement but even a withdrawal of such provision as have hitherto found necessary to meet the medical, educational and economic needs of the area." Then Lord Willingdon referred to the item abolishing the post of the Chief Inspector of Factories and showed how it was essential for labour advancement and to meet the requirements of the League of Nations.

The Indian political stage was now undergoing a swift transformation. The term of the first reformed Council terminated with the end of the official year 1922-23. Congressmen who had boycotted the Councils now threatened invasion. In Madras, they found themselves in an unhopeful minority, the ministerial party again swept the board. The Coconada carnival was a roaring fiasco; the Congress-Muslim scheme for a volunteer organisation in the South, like the Akali Dals in the North, fell flat; Jajirat-al-Arab agitation was a comic joke in distant Madras. Trouble in the Krishna valley was more serious. Though he sustained severe reverses in the beginning, Shri Rama Raju, with a strong force under command, reached Annavaram in the Godavari district and went straight to the police station in search of ammunition. The reinforcements, called in immediately, were handicapped for lack of

local support and guerrilla warfare continued for over a month before the final rout of the tough rebel. In October the party made a regular attack on police posts at Gudam and the crisis eased only when operations of the Assam Rifles quelled the hardy insurgents.

Welcoming the new Council on 26th November 1923, Lord Willingdon made an extensive survey of the work done and dwelt at length on the difficulties through which local bodies had to pass, explained how they were not entirely responsible for the financial embarrassment in which they had found themselves and sympathetically urged them to realise the responsibilities of the heavy public duties they had to discharge: "It will be remembered that Government, in the year before the introduction of the Reforms, passed important measures dealing with local self-government which gave very widely extended powers to non-officials in regard to the administration of these bodies. We did so deliberately at the time because we felt that responsibility for administration should be given at once in these lesser bodies as a training ground for non-officials in all parts of our Presidency, and as a real test of the manner in which they would undertake their important duties. The passing of these Bills has had far-reaching effects on the administration of local affairs. Official control has been relaxed and restricted to emergencies when danger to public health and safety is imminent; the strength of Boards and Councils has been considerably increased and nominations confined to the backward classes; the franchise has been extended

to all persons who pay any of the principal taxes ; local bodies have been given almost complete control over their budgets and their subordinate establishments ; and taluk boards have been made statutorily and to a large extent administratively independent of district boards. This entire relaxation of official control has placed an immense responsibility on non-official Presidents, but this has not been the only difficulty under which they started their administrative duties. Owing to a combination of circumstances which I propose shortly to describe, local bodies got involved in grave financial embarrassments from which the Government have only just now extricated them . . . . I have dwelt on these facts at some length, because in appraising the work of non-officials it is important that it should be realised that they had formidable difficulties to encounter, for it is certain that this extraordinary combination of circumstances to which I have referred would have made local administration during this transitional period extremely difficult under any conditions and that the inexperience of and consequent mistakes made by non-officials was only one of the causes which has led to deterioration of the financial administration of local bodies. The finances of local bodies have now been brought into a state of solvency . . . . Having spoken of some of the difficulties of local administration during the last three years, let me now come to the shortcomings—some of them inevitable in a transitional period—of the non-official agency on which some friendly advice may perhaps be offered. . . . Local bodies have not adequately realised

that they have been entrusted with some of the most important services affecting national welfare and that for these services the Minister in charge is responsible to the Legislative Council. No Government, however democratic and advanced politically, could afford to allow local bodies to neglect these services of national importance. Secondly, there have been allegations of a tendency among salaried officers of the boards and councils to shirk their legitimate work and pay more attention to the individual wants and wishes of the members of the boards . . . . Thirdly, there are indications that a high standard of efficiency and purity in local administration has not been adequately appreciated by the public . . . . I think it may truly be said that there has been no hesitation or faltering on the part of the Government in handing over authority and control in local affairs to non-officials. It is for them now to prove their fitness for the task."

The most important measure introduced in the second Council before Lord Willingdon's departure was undoubtedly the re-drafted Irrigation Bill. We cannot speak too highly of the measure; from the view-point of broad masses it was truly epoch-making. Official records cannot possibly reveal the extent of beneficent influence Lord Willingdon brought to bear on the landed aristocracy to get through this measure which has truly opened a vista of prosperity for the Presidency. As stated in the beginning of this chapter economically and industrially Madras is one of the most backward provinces in India. The new Council, specially the vigorous and ever-active

Swarajist element there, directed a fusillade of criticism against this sad condition. But the firing seemed sometimes in a wrong direction. One important reason for the state of affairs was given by Sir Charles Todhunter in introducing the budget on 27th February 1923, when he referred to the injustice to which Madras was subjected for over thirty years in matters financial. The second reason was given by Mr. (now Sir) C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar in introducing the Madras Irrigation Bill on 6th February 1924 when he proved how the reluctance of the landed aristocracy to come into line with other provinces in irrigation laws had left thousands of acres of countryside desolate which could easily be turned into a land flowing with milk and honey. We shall first deal with the financial reason and quote Sir Charles :

“I am frequently asked why it is that the Presidency, with its great resources, is so little developed, and why in certain matters, more especially education and medical relief, we have such a much lower standard of expenditure than one of our neighbours . . . . . Thirty years ago, in 1892-1893, we were as we are to-day budgetting for a deficit. The revenue given us to spend was 302 lakhs, while we could not possibly carry on with less than 318. If we had the present settlement, we should have been in receipt of 756 lakhs and our expenditure on the new basis would have been 408 ; in other words, our contribution (to Central Government) in those days was nearly one-half of our gross revenue on the new basis. Ten years later in 1902-1903, we had arrived

at an exact equilibrium, but we were not much better than before. Our total figures for revenue and expenditure were 367 lakhs. Had we had the new settlement our revenue would have been 917 lakhs and our expenditure 471, so that again very nearly half of our gross revenue went to the Government of India. By the beginning of the War, in 1914-15, things had improved somewhat, but we were again in a position of budgetting for a deficit. Our revenue was 757 lakhs and our expenditure 822, but if we had the new settlement, our revenue would have been 1,260 lakhs and our expenditure 841, leaving a contribution of 428. Then followed the four years of the War (1915-1919) in which our expenditure was restricted in every direction, with the result that we came out at the end with a balance of 210 lakhs, a very great sum indeed for Madras, though it was much less than the balance as accumulated by more fortunate provinces, and is indeed less than one of them can still boast. In the first budget after the War, that for 1919-20, we had a revenue of 886 lakhs and provided for the expenditure, in addition to the revenue, of 75 lakhs out of the accumulated balances, which gave us a total expenditure of 961 lakhs, but again, if we had the new settlement, there would have been no need to draw on our balances. Our revenue would have been 1,481 lakhs and our expenditure 983, leaving a margin of 498." Then he retailed the difficulty of the Meston Award, the post-war depression and how Government were fighting it. To come to the second point, it may be noted that progress in irrigation had been held up in Mad-

ras for want of regulating measures and in the year 1905 in reply to the Madras Government's request for loan sanction Government of India said :

“The Government of India as at present advised, are decidedly of opinion that legislation is necessary in Madras in order to secure to Government such power of control over the waters stored for irrigation as will enable it to make the best possible distribution thereof and to prevent embarrassing litigation, although they will be prepared to consider the present scheme when they have received a satisfactory reply. Even in the event of the sanction of the Secretary of State being accorded they would be reluctant to authorize the commencing of construction until the irrigation law has been placed on a satisfactory basis.”

The Government of India similarly turned down the request from Madras Government in 1909, 1912, and 1919. Lord Willingdon, eager to remove the handicap sent out the Irrigation Bill but conservative interests turned it down. He sent out a second Bill which however was successfully piloted by that great statesman Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar introducing the bill surveyed the entire field covering the subject of irrigation, and we cannot do better than to quote him at some length for a correct view on the complex subject : “We feel that, whereas other provinces are stealing marches over us, we are behind them very much. What is the reason ? Within the past two or three years the Sutlej Project (the Punjab) has practically reached fruition, the Sukkur Project (Sind) has been



sanctioned, and such other projects have been taken up, taking advantage of the limited amount of money available to them. We feel pessimistic about being able to get any money necessary for any large projects unless we are able to go and tell them (Government of India) 'Your objections have been answered, your difficulties have been remedied; this Presidency is willing to place the Irrigation Law on a satisfactory basis' . . . . This is practically the only province that has not got an Irrigation Law. We cannot blame the Government of India if they say that without codification of the rules, we cannot sanction large sums because there may be chances of embarrassing litigation. I have placed before the House a list of various projects which have been delayed or held up owing to the non-passage of the Irrigation Law. There are 30,000 acres which could have been cultivated but for want of water in the Ganjam District. In Kurnool, there are 46,000 acres and so on and so on until you come to a total of two hundred thousand acres or one-fifth million acres of land which cannot be cultivated . . . . Moreover, I have pointed out in the list that there are larger irrigation projects which cannot be worked without Irrigation Law. If the Mettur Project is carried out 280,000 acres could be irrigated in the Tanjore District. Seven hundred and thirty-five thousand acres of first crop and 160,000 acres of second crop could be had in Kistna and Guntur districts. The Tungabhadra project involves thirteen crores and it will bring a million acres of wet crop. Is it, therefore, not a matter of pride and urgent importance that we

should set our house in order to begin betimes and see that what has not been made possible till now is made possible and see that this country realises its great destiny as an agricultural country ? No one is more anxious for industrial progress than myself. But let us conceive it as dependent upon the agricultural prosperity. The rest will come of its own accord. Shall we contemplate with equanimity the possible delay for a year more." Warming to the subject, he said: "Whenever I come before this Council asking for grants for irrigation, I have met with generous response, and that is so because it is realised, and justly realised, that irrigation is the first and foremost duty of the State in the country. They realise that in an agricultural country, dry in many places as the Presidency is, without adequate facilities for irrigation we shall not produce any prosperity. Let us for a moment think of the two large schemes which are now before us. Take the great Sangameswaram scheme. . . . . If we have the means and that scheme is started, what does it mean ? It means that it will be possible to traverse the greater part of South India, from the Kistna up to the Coonum, taking that project through some of the most arid and desolate parts of the Ceded Districts so as to make those Districts a garden of vegetation instead of being the barren scene of conflicts between officials and famine conditions. Take again the Mettur scheme. What will it mean ? We have an extent of a quarter of a million acres which will become available for irrigation and irrigation will be on the same lines as the

Cauvery delta. That region will be a garden whereas to-day it is practically barren and desolate. I have only recounted the two most important and largest schemes. There are tens, dozens, hundreds of schemes awaiting development. Wherever we turn we are handicapped by lack of legislation, and it is for that reason that successive administrations have failed to achieve a solution of the problem of agricultural depression."

Answering the objections and doubts of the landed aristocracy, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar, said, "they (Government) have not embarked on any policy of taking away the existing rights of proprietary landholders. I am now reminded of the passage in one criticism which was made on this matter. The newspaper *Swarajya* started by saying that I was going to placate zamindars because I have yielded to their blandishments and their undoubted influence. The next day, the same newspaper, in connection with the possibility of the further progress of this Bill, has said that the Ministers propose to support the Bill, that they have sold the zamindars and that zamindars can no longer rely on the Ministers. It seems to me that when these two issues are read together, I can legitimately say that on the whole the path I have pursued is right."

Appealing to the zamindars for co-operation—they were not on talking terms with the Bill—Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar said: "I nominated zamindar after zamindar to serve on that (Irrigation Bill Select) Committee. For some reason or other, they could not and did not take active part in the deliberations

of that Committee . . . . I asked them to come and help to remedy the defects and to take away the difficulties found in the Bill. For some reason or other they did not attend, but still I would implore them to take an interest in this Bill and put forward suggestions, constructive suggestions. I for one will welcome the day when they all will join to consolidate and put forward their contentions.”

“Now there is another class of criticism which I must refer to in passing. It is a criticism made by a very influential landholder of the southern districts for whom I have much respect. He begins his criticisms with the observation that the Bill is a socialistic legislation. All that I can say is, if I am blamed as a socialist on the one hand and a partisan of the aristocracy on the other, I do not know where I am. I am an advocate of the rights of each person being preserved in tact and the interference of Government coming in where it is necessary and not otherwise, that is where it is absolutely necessary.”

The Congress movement had now reached its low water-mark ; the Swarajists in the Madras Council steadily veered to constitutionalism in all but name ; the resolution for discrediting the Ministry chosen by Lord Willingdon was defeated by a swamping majority. The doctrine of direct action stood suspected, constitutionalism was in full ascent. Lord Willingdon had achieved the purpose of his administration. They were no empty words when on 3rd April 1924 proroguing the Council for the last time he said :

“As I stand here to-day to prorogue for the last

time this session of the Legislative Council I do not propose to detain you with any survey of the work you have achieved during the past year ; I come here to bid farewell to all you gentlemen with whom I have been associated in carrying on the administration of this Presidency and briefly to express my sincere and genuine regret that I am in a few days breaking an association which I have valued extremely, for I have received nothing but the greatest consideration at your hands . . . . And to-day I wish to express my warmest congratulations to you all and my deep sense of satisfaction that when I return to England I can truly say that the members of the Legislature in Madras, whatever untoward happenings may have occurred in Legislative Councils elsewhere, have steadily administered the work of our Council on sound constitutional lines and can render a good account of their stewardship since the advent of the Reforms. Let me add that this is largely due to the spirit of friendly co-operation and goodwill which has always existed between officials and non-officials in this Council for which I am sincerely thankful to all concerned." "It has been my privilege during the last eleven years to be at the head of the administration of two great Provinces in India and I shall always look back on those years as a period during which I have gained much experience and have learnt something at all events of the great problems which confront us in this country at the present time" . . . . . "Looking back over those years, I feel I owe a great debt of gratitude to India. She has given me for eleven years a very happy

home and a life full of engrossing and absorbing interests. She has given me many great personal friends whose friendship, I hope, I may retain for long years. Though I shall be living far away I shall endeavour to pay the debt I owe by continuing my active interest in the welfare of your country, and in assisting to press forward what I believe to be your just and constitutional claims until you reach your promised goal of responsible government. Mr. President, the clouds on the horizon of the political future of India may seem lowering at the moment; great questions of imperial importance have got to be solved. But I am still a complete optimist. Let us all tackle these problems with a real desire for co-operation and in a spirit of fair understanding and compromise, let us show some imagination with regard to the difficulties that lie before us, some evidence of mutual confidence and trust; if we do this I am certain that the clouds of distrust and antagonism will all disappear, and India will continue to be in future as it has been in the past a trusted partner of, and sharer in the destinies of the British Empire." It was that optimism and faith in the people of India that made for success of diarchy in Madras and, despite political and economic difficulties, achieved a record of progress in town and village which drew fourth the eulogy of Government's life-long critics.

## THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

**R**AGING like a terrific whirlwind over the head of the quiet, constructive activities recorded in the previous chapter was a movement imperilling the entire administrative machinery. Lord Willingdon assumed the Governorship of the Madras Presidency on 10th April 1919. On 13th April occurred an episode that echoed and re-echoed down the hills and plains of India for months and years to come and roused the tempo of the Indian national movement to a level never witnessed before. At such a juncture when any miscalculation or inaction might have led to the most ravaging consequences, even to the extent of jeopardising the entity of the whole Government, the head of the administration required character of a type hardly ever exercised in India since the days of the great Mutiny. That the movement at no time in Madras reached the dimensions it did in other provinces, gives a correct measure of the sagacity and foresight of Lord Willingdon's career in the Southern Presidency.

The root of the upsurge lay in the consequences

of the War. India had made gigantic War sacrifices. The total combatant and non-combatant force it raised was 1,457,000 strong of which 943,000 were sent overseas. Financially India's contribution came roughly to Rs. 200 crores. It pressed heavily on the masses. Imbued with disturbing ideas and visions in foreign lands the returning Indian soldier scarcely contributed to village harmony. The fluctuations in food prices and the hardships of trade restrictions, etc., combined to create the appropriate background for a political upheaval. The War led to concentration of wealth in the hands of the upper ten, the lower ninety went down still lower. Food speculators and industrialists made money by the ton, but the villager's land changed hands at an alarming rate. Through the demands of the War the bigger industries flourished, the smaller and backward ones were being swept out. The position was well surveyed in the Bombay Government Resolution on Land Revenue Administration for 1916-17 in the course of which it said: "Those industries which were in a position to take advantage of the conditions thus created (by the War) reaped abundant profits but many of the smaller indigenous industries . . . . experienced the greatest difficulty in maintaining their existence. . . . . On the other hand, the village weaving industry continued in a state of depression in consequence of inflated prices of yarns and dyes. . . . . The great rise in price of many articles in ordinary use pressed heavily on the less affluent sections of the community, particularly on those whose resources of livelihood were fixed with refer-



ence to pre-war condition." The Bombay Government Administration Report for 1917-18 stated pointedly : "The most characteristic feature of the year was a general and a very marked rise in prices. The diminished outturn of the year, the withholding of stock in expectation of further rise in prices, transport difficulties due to war conditions and speculation, all contributed to a great and serious rise in price of food stuffs, cloth and all other articles of general consumption."

Aware of the approaching post-war consequences the Government of India appointed a Committee to report on the fast-growing underground revolutionary movement which made startling revelations and recommended drastic remedies. The Congress was aghast. It could not reconcile these measures, giving arbitrary powers to the executive, with Montagu's declaration for the establishment of responsible Government in India. It could but little appreciate that both the Rowlatt recommendations and the Montagu declaration were identical in their ultimate objective which was to secure a firm and regularly running administrative machinery with all the co-operating elements mobilised for transfer of greater self-governing responsibility through the Montagu Constitution. The publication of the Rowlatt Report on 19th July 1918 found Mr. Gandhi in the forefront of the political stage. A wave of agitation swept over the country uniting every variety of opinion on the common issue.

A fortnight before Lord Willingdon's arrival in Madras the Rowlatt Bill was passed with all the

elected and nominated Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council solidly voting against it and the entire Indian Press calling upon it the wrath of heaven. With the Viceregal sanction to the Bill Mr. Gandhi issued a manifesto fixing 6th April for a national strike inaugurating the Satyagraha Movement. It was a novel and attractive idea and transferred the Congress political life from the limits of constitutional agitation to the field of direct action.

Preparations on a gigantic scale marked the novel procedure. By mistake the national strike was observed in Delhi a week before the appointed time; there was disorder and the Military opened fire on the crowd. The hartal on 6th April passed off peacefully. On his way to Delhi, for studying the situation there, Mr. Gandhi was served with an order prohibiting entry into the Punjab. The news of his arrest and deportation to Bombay, on breaking the order, electrified the country. Arrests and imprisonments then were quite different from what they are to-day; the incarceration of a single popular leader then meant a signal for resentment and rioting. The atmosphere was fully charged when on 10th April Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal were arrested in Amritsar. The reactions were terrific; India was in a whirl. A boisterous demonstration in Amritsar went up to the Deputy Commissioner and was stated to have been dispersed at the point of rifle shots. The procession broke into violence, looting shops, tearing down telegraphic communications, setting fire to Government offices. General Dyer occupied Amritsar on the 11th.

The next day was peaceful, it was a lull before the storm. On the 13th evening occurred the Jallianwala Bagh episode followed by disturbances in the districts of Amritsar, Lahore and Lyallpore in the Punjab, and in Ahmedabad and Viramgam in Bombay. What happened at the Jallianwala Bagh is worth noting here as on this point the political stage swiftly revolved. A meeting had been convened in an open space called the Jallianwala Bagh which is surrounded on all sides by high buildings with only a narrow passage for the crowd to pour in. General Dyer with a strong force occupied the compound wall and kept machine guns ready for action. The meeting was prohibited under military orders but the Congress leaders claimed that they were not aware of it. However, after the Bagh was fully packed, as Sir Valentine Chirol says in "India": "Without a word of warning he (General Dyer) opened and kept upon them a fusillade that did not stop until, as he himself said, his party's ammunition was exhausted, though the painstricken multitude broke at once, struggling to escape through the narrow exit or attempting vainly to climb the walls, or in despair throwing themselves flat on the ground. General Dyer, according to his own statement, personally directed the firing to the point where the crowd was thickest. The 'targets', he declared, were 'good' and by the time he and his men went off by the same way they had come, they had killed 379, according to official figures published some months later by Government, and they left about 1,200 wounded on the ground for whom he did not consider it his 'job' to provide any help what-

ever.....He followed up his action at the Bagh by a 'crawling order' compelling all Indians to go on all fours who wanted to pass through a certain street in which an English woman had been nearly done to death by the mob in one of the previous day's rioting.....Throughout the Punjab martial law was enforced with the utmost rigour and sometimes by quite unprecedented methods."

News regarding happenings in the Punjab was strictly censored, newspapers themselves were in a state of nervous fright, railway transport was under rigid supervision ; but some of the eye-witnesses narrated the tale to the "Bombay Chronicle" which came out with a daring account of the incident. The result was instantaneous.

Following the disturbances though Mr. Gandhi suspended the Satyagraha Movement and placed himself at Government disposal, agitation preparatory to direct action steadily grew in intensity, and the demand for redress of the Punjab wrongs was added to the one for the repeal of the Rowlatt Act. The Jhallianwala Bagh became the central lever of intensified agitation, the demand for an inquiry therein the spearhead of attack. The open proceedings of the Hunter Committee, instead of soothing the popular feeling added fuel to the fire, and the Congress Report on Amritsar turned it into a roaring blaze. The recommendations of the Hunter Committee, the Government of India's Despatch thereon, the Secretary of State's communique, the debate in the Commons and specially in the Lords, all combined to turn it into a conflagration.

The announcement of the Treaty of Savres synchronised with the publication of the Hunter Committee's Report, and so the injured Khilafat sentiment combined with the general resentment against the Rowlatt Act and the Punjab issue. Accompanying the publication of the Turkish Treaty was the Viceroy's message sympathising with "the pain caused to the Muslims," asking them to brace themselves with patience and resignation to the misfortunes of Turkey. The message seemed to make matters worse. The original agitation, it may be remembered, was directed against the Rowlatt Act. Then came the Punjab grievance and lastly the Khilafat. The issues instead of narrowing down, were thus growing with the expansion of the agitation. It seemed a sure sign of mishandling.

Khilafat conferences followed each other in quick succession. The first All-India Khilafat Conference in the third week of November 1919 decided to boycott the Peace celebrations and to go instead into mourning. The second Khilafat Conference, held in the Congress week, affirmed the previous resolutions and proposed to send two deputations, one to the Viceroy and another to Turkey. His Highness the Aga Khan and Syed Ameer Ali headed a representation to the Premier signed, among others, by a number of leading Europeans in India. In December 1919 Government released the Ali Brothers. That was something ! The deputation to the Viceroy came back empty-handed. The third Khilafat Conference in February 1920 passed more stringent resolutions. The deputation to England, received by Mr. Fisher and

the Prime Minister, was barred from appearing before the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference. Within four days of the publication of the Treaty, while the deputation was on its way back to India, the Khilafat Committee voted for non-co-operation. The All-India Congress Committee followed suit and summoned a special plenary session of the Congress.

Events were now moving with great rapidity. With another general strike on 31st August the non-co-operation movement entered on its pathetic journey. Gandhian programme had already been adopted at various provincial conferences, but at the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta it was sanctioned by a marginal majority. In the interval between the special session and the usual one three months later, Mr. Gandhi accompanied by the Ali Brothers toured the country propagating the new gospel. Schools and colleges were invaded by politics; the influence of Pandit Malaviya at the Benares University began waning; the trustees of the Aligarh University could reject the suggestion to turn the university "national" only under the protective shadow of British bayonets; the student world was for the first time brought on the battle-front of political direct action.

The Nagpur Congress sanctioned an elaborate programme of non-co-operation, changed the Congress creed, demanded the resignations of those elected to the new legislatures, and declared for the boycott of the visit of H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught. With the whirling propaganda following the plenary Congress session, the Government of India changed the policy of non-interference pursued after the Pun-

jab disturbances and measured popular reaction to every step taken. They first declared the Congress volunteer organisations illegal, but thousands of arrests for defiance had, due to Mr. Gandhi's good influence, no undesirable reactions, and so by the promulgation of the Seditious Meetings Act meetings and demonstrations were brought under control. The operation of sections 107 and 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code, requiring the non-co-operators to furnish securities or to face prison in the alternative, helped forward the peaceful march to jail. The movement was being steadily sapped.

As a counter-blast the All-India Congress Committee at Bezwada in March 1920 issued a three month programme for, among other items, the collection of a crore of rupees, enrolment of 25 lakhs of members, and placing 20 lakhs of charkhas in operation. The struggle on both sides was now reaching a decisive phase. The Congress propaganda was gigantic, the Bezwada programme was completed by the end of June. Rioting became more frequent; there was rioting in Malegaon; in Bihar the disturbances extended over the whole province; twelve thousand labourers in Assam entered upon a turbulent trek and firing by the Gurkhas had evoked sympathetic strikes on railways and steamships in Eastern Bengal causing a total transport deadlock for two months. Military intervention had to be ruled out. To see how legal action would work Government decided to prosecute the Ali Brothers, but before they could launch proceedings Mr. Gandhi had an interview with Lord Reading and the plan

was dropped. The Karachi Khilafat Conference, however, reached the danger zone in pronouncing it "unlawful for any Muslim from that day to be, or help or acquiesce in their recruitment." The resolution further proclaimed that if the British fought the Angora Government—which was in the meanwhile contemplating finishing with the Khalif—the Muslims of India would start Civil Disobedience for complete independence.

It was a crisis of the first magnitude. No Government, alive to its duties and responsibilities, could permit tampering of the military. Either the Government must fight or capitulate, and they fought successfully. In the middle of July those who spoke on the Army Resolution at Karachi were arrested, and except Shri Shankaracharya, all of those including the Ali Brothers, were convicted and sent to jail. The country, it must be said to the lasting credit of Mr. Gandhi, received the news with perfect non-violence.

On 4th October Mr. Gandhi issued a manifesto reiterating "the right of a citizen to preach against recruitment and remaining in the Army," the next day the Congress Working Committee ratified the manifesto and ordered a national hartal on the day of the Prince of Wales' arrival. On 4th November the All-India Congress Committee endorsed the Army Resolution and declared it the duty of Government servants and civilians to resign their posts. This was indeed within striking distance of revolution. The Prince of Wales landed in Bombay on 17th November amidst the bonfire blaze of foreign cloth



and the blood orgy of class riots. Immediately followed a straight drive against the Congress. Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Motilal Nehru and the Rev. Stokes were clapped in jail in the first week of December and the lesser lights continued the trail. The arrest of neither the Khilafat nor the Congress leaders created any serious administrative problem. The leader of the movement though still free was awaiting his turn.

The Ahmedabad Congress met with its President behind the prison-bars. Hakim Ajmal Khan who replaced Mr. C. R. Das gave a nervous performance. The Congress passed only one important resolution giving Mr. Gandhi dictatorial powers, and the supreme command, virtually unified from the beginning, received official sanction. From the period of preparation the Congress was now going on to the stage of action.

With baited breath the nation waited for the no-tax experiment. The Government had no doubt about the anarchy and bloodshed that, in spite of the best intentions in the world, must follow the campaign. On his way to Bardoli, the chosen scene of action, Mr. Gandhi heard of the blood-thirsty butchery of the Chauri-Chaura mob and immediately suspended initiating direct action. The contemplated experiment cracked under the weight of its own contradictions and conflicts, and collapsed before the authorities had launched a full drive. The Working Committee endorsed Mr. Gandhi's decision, but the Congress ranks were split in twain. In the All-India Congress Committee, for the first time since its

inception, the Working Committee had to face a vote of censure. The censure resolution was defeated, but the scattered ranks of the Congress could not be rallied again. A fortnight after the All-India Congress Committee's endorsement of the Bardoli decision, Mr. Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to six years imprisonment on a sedition charge. The movement fizzled out. The Swaraj Party born out of the Civil Disobedience collapse brought the Congress back to its historic function as a constitutional opposition to Government.

To the rapid survey of the non-co-operation movement presented above certain facts regarding its leader have to be added for a true perspective. On Mr. Gandhi's character, selflessness and utter sincerity, his worst enemies can cast no aspersions. His services to the Empire have been indisputably the most magnificent. In his letter to "Every Englishman in India" he truly said: "I put my life four times in peril for the sake of the Empire,—at the time of the Boer War when I was in charge of the Ambulance corps whose work was mentioned in General Buller's despatches; at the time of the Zulu revolt in Natal when I was in charge of a similar corps; at the time of the commencement of the late War when I raised an ambulance corps and as a result of the strenuous training had a severe attack of pleurisy; and lastly in fulfilment of my promise to Lord Chelmsford at the War Conference in Delhi, I threw myself into such an active recruiting campaign in Kaira District involving long and trying marches, that I had an attack of dysentery which almost proved fatal."

Mr. Gandhi's superb loyalty is further evidenced in the fact that on every occasion of embarrassment to Government he promptly suspended the movement and placed his services wholly at their disposal. After coming to India apart from direct War services, he used all his political influence to prevent unrest, and to discover grievances only for a quick remedy. Mr. Montagu in his "Indian Diary" recognises these services when he notes: "He (Mr. Gandhi) is a social reformer; he has a real desire to find grievances and to cure them, not for any reasons of self-advertisement, but to improve the conditions of his fellow men. He is the real hero of the settlement of the Indian question in South Africa, where he suffered imprisonment. He has just been helping Government to find a solution for the grievances of indigo labour in Bihar . . . . all he wants is that we should get India on our side. He wants the millions of India to leap to the assistance of the British throne." To resist the Rowlatt Act it is true he started the satyagraha campaign, but with the disturbances in the Punjab and Gujerat he promptly suspended it much against popular clamour. As late as the end of 1919 Mr. Gandhi offered wholeheartedly to work the new constitution, for in response to the Royal Proclamation on 24th December 1919 granting amnesty to political prisoners Mr. Gandhi came out with an editorial in the "Young India" saying: "The Proclamation issued by the Sovereign on the 24th instant is a document of which the British people have every reason to be proud and with which every Indian ought to feel satisfied. . . . .

The Reforms Act coupled with the Proclamation is an earnest of the intention of the British people to do justice to India. And it ought to remove suspicion on that score. . . . Our duty, therefore, is not to subject them (the reforms) to carping criticism but to settle down quietly to work so as to make them a thorough success and thus anticipate the time for a full measure of 'responsibility.' These and many other facts show Mr. Gandhi, at heart a co-operator, fighting the authorities only in circumstances too strong for his restraining influence.

We have referred in the previous chapter to the repercussions of the movement on the Madras Presidency, and shown how the measures Lord Willingdon adopted, coupled with direct state relief where it had the basis of an economic grievance, kept the movement at a low level. It only remains for us now to show how the dual policy he is pursuing to-day functioned in those days. The first object of the non-co-operation movement, as its name implies, is to isolate the people from Government. Lord Willingdon's reply thereto was to establish contact with all possible sections of public opinion, and at no time was the Madras Government in closer touch with responsible public opinion than during this period. Lord Willingdon's Government House welcomed all who had grievances to redress, views to ventilate or schemes to suggest for the progress of the Presidency. It was almost a complaint among orthodox Europeans that Lord Willingdon had turned Government House into a headquarters for the Madrasis. Whatever the value

of such opinion, the result of the policy was that on the eve of Lord Willingdon's departure from Madras every section of opinion, including the Swarajists, joined in proclaiming the pre-eminent success of his close association with Indian opinion. Lord Willingdon's reply to the boycott of schools and colleges was to open more schools and colleges, to give wider powers over them to local bodies, to form District Education Committees and to invite their advice, suggestions and co-operation for remedying the much-criticised educational defects. Lord Willingdon's reply to the boycott of schools was to sanction freeships for the backward classes, to open primary schools with the long-demanded industrial or agricultural bias, to meet the pressing demand for the compulsory medical inspection of school children. Lord Willingdon's reply to the boycott of the Reforms was to get the elected majority party to form its own Ministry and to carry out its own plans and programmes. Lord Willingdon's reply to the charakha programme was to send out organised parties for scientific improvement in the spinning and weaving machinery, to help enable those in the trade to hold out against the competitive price rates ruling the cotton mills. Lord Willingdon's reply to the no-tax campaign was to develop irrigation throughout the Presidency so that with improvement in rural condition the economic foundation of unrest may be weakened. Lord Willingdon's reply to the boycott of foreign goods was to develop the port of Madras for greater foreign trade for the Presidency's benefit. Lord Willingdon's reply to Brahmin supremacy was

to afford special facilities for the Non-Brahmin, the Depressed Class and the Aboriginal talent.

It is generally granted that Lord Willingdon avoided direct attack on the movement till there was no alternative left consistent with performance of his duty; and on every drastic step taken he was able to carry the most responsible public opinion along with him. Direct attack on the movement was not launched, as we have seen before, till about the middle of 1921. Towards the end of that year the Madras Government decided to apply Part 2 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act to the whole Presidency. Explaining the decision Lord Willingdon said in the Legislative Council on 16th December 1921: "I understand that there has been some anxiety felt by some honourable members with reference to our decision to apply Part 2 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act to the whole of our Presidency.... I, therefore, take this opportunity of assuring the House that, when we extended the Act, we did so purely as a precautionary measure and that it is our profound hope that we may have no reason to make use of it..... We are often told that this carrying out of our duty to the people is the adoption of a repressive policy. I deny this entirely, for there is not a man in this Presidency who need fear the terrors of this law if he chooses to keep the law. Nor, I believe, is there any fear of the law or of the instruments of the law, on the part of the ordinary citizen." In the same speech Lord Willingdon announcing his policy on the non-co-operation movement said: "I can assure honourable

members that Government have no desire to take drastic action against any one, but law and order must be maintained, in order that the law-abiding citizen may feel safe and secure in carrying out his ordinary avocations. I wish, however, to point out how extraordinarily difficult is the position of Government in a matter of this sort. It really seems to be this. If any dangerous outbreak occurs owing to the activities of any revolutionary agitators, Government are taken severely to task for not having taken strong action to prevent it; but if that strong action is taken, they are told that the moment for such action is inopportune and that it will have disastrous consequences. I think that the firm action which Government have taken with regard to civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes has been generally approved; but when the prime mover and leader of that policy is arrested, action which I consider to have been amply justified and which Mr. Gandhi appears to think fully justified himself, it appears from what I read in the press that in several quarters the arrest is considered most impolitic and undesirable. I can but say that it is impossible for Government to be on both sides of the fence at the same time." It was the outstanding success of Lord Willingdon's policy towards the non-co-operation movement and the smooth working of the reformed constitution he secured during these stormy days, that undoubtedly were among the main factors which led the British cabinet later to choose him to the Viceroyalty of India, in a political situation similar in form but more aggravated in degree.

## THE MOPLAH REBELLION

**T**HE Non-co-operator was a teaser, the Moplah proved a dangerous adversary. He leaped into fame over-night, and occupied the front pages of nationalist journals for weeks on end. India had known little of his existence before. How the adventurous Arab came down all the way to the South, leaving no traces on the intervening track, settled on the land, absorbed everything of the soil except the outward form of religion, married its women and formed a humble colony of his own constitutes one of the obscure romances of Indian life-history. The Moplah, despite his short temper and somewhat cruel habits, is a considerably domesticated creature now, submitting to the exactions of the zamindar in all meekness. He pursues his peaceful avocation amidst quiet surroundings far from the swirling eddies of political life-current. Economically he is no better than the average Indian agriculturist, if anything somewhat worse, educationally he is much below the low average, socially he lives in a world of his own in sublime indifference to civilisation. The



educated middle class, the most steady section in any society, is practically absent from this Indo-Arab tribe. Thus the foundation of steady, healthy, progressive influence is extremely slender in the Moplah community and this gives a clue to the sudden outburst in 1921.

In 1921, things were bad all round, agricultural condition was none too good, the landlord would not relax his exactions, strange cries of Swaraj and similar inspiring phrases came to his ears, the cry of the Khilafat trenched on his religious tendencies. The Moplah thought of doing his bit for the Khilafat and Swaraj and, as a contribution to both, tried to get rid of his immediate inconvenience the Hindu landlord. The result was a rebellion of a magnitude and intensity never experienced since 1857.

In the forest fastnesses of Malabar, the Moplahs, from the beginning of August 1921 till well towards the middle of the next year, carried on a blood-thirsty campaign of murder, arson, loot, and incendiarism which for its ferocity and recklessness had no parallel in this century. After a preliminary orgy he entered on regular guerrilla warfare that kept a strong military force engaged for months. Railway lines were torn, communications cut, Government buildings burnt to ashes, standing crops looted, the military force was, at one stage, isolated and besieged, the police force was mauled. Reinforcements, artillery, machine guns, and armoured cars, were brought into action before anything like order was restored. We need not go into the details of the rising, for the broad facts given in the Madras Administration

Report are enough to reveal the perplexing character of the task before Lord Willingdon. Referring to the rebellion the Report says : "There were signs of trouble early in the year, but firm action on the part of the District Officers checked the agitation and produced an outward appearance of quietness ; but at the beginning of August 1921 the police came into conflict with a crowd of Moplahs in attempting to arrest an offender and were compelled to give up the attempt. It was then clear that serious trouble was imminent. Steps were taken to reinforce the troops in the district, and on the 20th of the month the District Magistrate with a body of troops and police went to Tirurangadi to arrest the ringleaders. The attempt was unsuccessful ; the force was attacked by enormous mobs of Moplahs and two European officers—one in the police and the other in the Leicester Regiment—were killed, and within a few days, the rebellion had spread over the Ernad and Walluranad taluks and parts of two others. The railway line was torn up in many places, road communications were blocked and public officers were attacked and property looted. Military reinforcements were hurried to the spot and a small garrison which had been cut off at Mallapuram, the centre of the rebellion area, was relieved at the end of August after a severe engagement at a place called Pukkottur, in which after five hours' fighting over 400 of the rebels must have been killed. Another British Police officer was killed in this engagement and several men were wounded. Almost from the beginning the rising definitely assumed the form of fanatical attacks on

all non-Mohammedans. . . . The rebels adopted guerrilla methods of warfare and over a full brigade of regular troops including detachments of the Leicester, Suffolk and Dorset Regiments, two Gurkha Battalions, a Garhwali and Burma Battalion and a specially raised force of 700 military police had to be employed before the rebellion was finally suppressed. Twenty-four policemen were killed and 29 wounded and 26 of the military were killed and 103 wounded in the course of the operations. Martial Law which was proclaimed on the 24th August 1921 was withdrawn on 24th February 1922, but it was not until the August of that year that the last of the rebel leaders was accounted for. In the magnitude of the operations, the rebellion surpassed all modern experience in the Madras Presidency ; and it has naturally left behind a bitterness of feeling which it will take years to assuage."

Lord Willingdon, addressing the Madras Legislative Council on 1st September 1921, enunciated his Government's decision to avoid any action that might antagonise public opinion, hoping at the same time that the combined effects of the reforms and the governmental endeavours of gradual ameliorative action would defeat the purpose of revolutionary agitation. Lord Willingdon said : " I wish to emphasise the fact that it was the mere attempt on the part of the district authorities to enforce ordinary process of law that was signal for a sudden and widespread violence directed in the first place against Government, their officers and the whole apparatus of civil administration.

Over a wide tract of the country, in an incredibly short space of time, communications of all kinds were wrecked or destructed, public offices and courts were attacked and their records destroyed. Police stations were plundered of their arms and ammunitions, and civil government was brought to a standstill. It may be said that Government have been remiss in not taking precautionary measures. To that I would reply that the settled policy has been as far as possible to avoid exciting public opinion, in the hope that the effect of the reforms would be gradually to defeat revolutionary agitation”.

The bitterness born of the stern counteracting measures was not assuaged for a prolonged period, but Lord Willingdon, like Lord Elgin after 1857, immediately set out for the solution of the grave problems which generated the rebellion. To effect a speedy reconciliation, Lord Willingdon sanctioned the release of 600 prisoners before his departure, the fines imposed by the summary courts and not collected were cancelled, and of those already imprisoned for non-payment of fines, 477 were set free, while the sentences against others liberally reduced. Further, through the funds publicly raised and supported by Government extensive reconstructive activities were undertaken and rural life was rehabilitated. These reconciliatory measures sanctioned with a swift decision had, as should be expected, an immediate healthy reaction, and when normal conditions were restored, racial bitterness was obliterated and peaceful activity pursued without fear of violence. It proved the sagacity of a policy that did not hesitate to take great decisions in a moment

requestioning transcendent boldness and far-sighted action for allaying public bitterness and rehabilitating the supremacy of governmental authority.

On the constructive side, the entire machinery of social service institutions in Madras and Bombay was set into motion. Funds were raised in distant provinces, first for immediate relief, later for setting up permanent institutions for uplifting the Moplah society. Lord Willingdon's administration realised that the greatest problem was economic, and the Servants of India Society under Government guidance camped in the Moplah territory to create a network of schools, co-operative societies, hospitals, dispensaries, maternity benefit centres, which while meeting the immediate social requirements became in due course the organised centres of constitutional efforts of progress, radiating the great lessons of respect for law and sanctity of authority. The weighty section of the Moplahs was further mobilised for goodwill and peaceful action by the organisation of village Panchayats throughout the province and exercised a healthy influence on the community for concordant advance. Within the space of a year, Lord Willingdon thus constructed a strong social basis for the consolidation of law and harmony, and the programme was so eminently productive that while the rest of the country during the last three years passed through a vortex of anarchy and entire provinces were handed over to the orgies of unruly mobs, Malabar maintained its balance and pursued the road of constitutional patriotism.

To understand the origin cause of the Moplah

Rebellion and to realise why Lord Willingdon, while doling out paliatives, wanted to go straight to these root causes, acquaintance with the land system sustaining the population is essential. The Moplahs are an agricultural community, mostly tenants; the majority of the landlords is Hindu. The outburst against the Hindus had, therefore, a strong social reason. The principal tenancy systems—Kanam, Panayam, Kuzhikkanam and Virampatam—constitute somewhat anachronistic relics of feudalism, for the tenant is left precious little pecuniary interest in land improvment and the high proportion of landlord tribute, if attempted without the protective arm of British rule would result in a cataclysmic upheaval. The rulers cognisant of this fact have from time to time through introduction of easeful measures alleayed tenant condition, but the crafty landlord often manages to get round the legal barbed-wires by means not altogether creditable.

Under the Kanam System land is rented out for a period of twelve years or more, the rents to be paid in advance before the crops are raised, and the nominal practice of paying interest on advance payments has little value to the ignorant tenant, for, as in the case of the money-lender, it is open to dishonest practices. If the tenure is renewed the rents are increased by twenty per cent. and the landlord reaps the benefit of improvements effected by the sweat of the tenant's brow. The landlord himself generally puts not a fraction of his receipts back into the land and its continuous deterioration, for which the tenant suffers, is the inevitable result ; yet

the system requires the tenant to pay in hard cash for such deterioration. Where the tenure is renewed, the additional 20 per cent. paid to the landlord is not shown in the deed of tenancy nor is it ever returned. More, the Janmi is free to resume the land at any time, and though theoretically he is bound to return the deposit money and pay for improvements done practically the arrangement has small value and nearly always works against the tenant's interests.

Under Virumpallam the tenancy is for only a year, and though in practice it continues over a longer period, there is a little certainty of sustained tenancy. On the other hand full two-thirds of the land produce constitutes here the rent charge and for longer leases, the landlord takes advances on which no interest is paid. Under Undarti, mostly in vogue on plantations, the tenant makes a lump sum payment for the rent of all the lease year in advance, and receives no interest thereon. The mere mention of these broad facts is sufficient to show the urgency of radical reform.

Government have from time to time attempted for a more equitable relationship between the tenant and the landlord. To secure the full market value of land improvements effected by the tenant an act was passed in 1887 and the position of the tenants was further strengthened by another measure in 1900, but the landlord is powerful and the tenant too weak and ignorant fully to profit by these provisions. With the memories of the rebellion still fresh, the most far-sighted consideration of liberal imperial policy would have

demanding at a drastic reorganisation of the land system, but an attempt in this direction by Lord Willingdon's successor found the landlords up in arms, and it seems unlikely that they will understand their permanent interest till Government force them into its realisation. In the meanwhile the measures adopted by Lord Willingdon within the framework of the existing law have restored public confidence in continued security of life and property.

No account of the Moplah Rebellion can be complete without reference to the one unfortunate event in the well-conducted governmental operations against the Malabar insurrection. On 19th November 1921 occurred the 'train tragedy' that sent a shudder of horror through the land. The facts briefly are these. One hundred Moplahs convicted in connection with the rebellion were sent by goods train from Tirur to Coimbatore on that day, but on arrival at Podanur, all of them were found unconscious and in a state of collapse; forty-six prisoners including three Hindus lay dead through asphyxiation and of the forty-six survivors six died on being taken out of the train at the station. Thirteen survivors were taken to the Civil Hospital, Coimbatore, and twenty-six to the Central Jail Hospital, but in the Civil Hospital, two died on arrival, four more in the same afternoon and two five days later. Out of the hundred prisoners, seventy thus succumbed to the hand of negligence, and immediately there was a clamour for an inquiry and punishment of the officers in charge of the vans. Lord Willingdon, realising the need for reassuring the public of Government's firm desire not to treat



vindictively with the rebels, immediately announced a Committee of Inquiry with its composition commanding general enlightened confidence. The Government of India on the receipt of the Committee's Report passed final orders on 30th August 1922 to the effect: "The Government concur with the view of the Committee that the use of luggage vans for the conveyance of prisoners in such an emergency was not in itself objectionable or inhuman.... Though not intended for passengers the vans were not closed trucks but ventilated vehicles, and where the venetians were not obstructed, there was sufficient perforation to enable considerable number of prisoners to be carried in them to safety. They agree also with the Committee that the practice of using vehicles of this exceptional type which were never intended for the conveyance of human beings, should not have been left to the unregulated discretion of subordinates but should have been brought under proper regulation. They concur also in the view of the Committee that for the omission to take this precaution, the Military Commander cannot be held responsible. The Government of India appreciate the admirable services rendered during the rebellion by Mr. Evans and Mr. Hitchcock and they recognise the arduous character of the work which devolved upon them. They cannot but greatly regret that neither of these officers took steps to bring the practice of conveying prisoners in these luggage vans under proper regulation. Had it been laid down that a responsible civil officer should, in consultation with the railway authorities, satisfy himself that the ventilation of each van was adequate

for the number of prisoners despatched in it, it is almost certain that no loss of life would have occurred. As between Mr. Hitchcock and Mr. Evans, the Government of India think the larger share of the responsibility attaches to Mr. Evans, who was constantly at Tirur, and had, therefore, greater opportunities for looking into the arrangements at that place for the transport and was the Superior Officer. They cannot, however, agree with the Committee that Sergeant Andrews cannot be blamed for this particular van. As the police officer-in-charge, he should not have limited his inspection to the question of security, but should have satisfied himself that the accommodation was suitable for the conveyance of the prisoners. There is independent testimony that the noise from the van was such as to suggest that the prisoners were in distress. The Committee observe that it is not possible to define with complete certainty the nature of the clamour made by the prisoners, but they cannot avoid the conclusion that the shouting and the moaning and calling for water and air must have been exceptional and so striking that they ought to have attracted the special attention of the Sergeant and his escort. The Government of India concur in this conclusion. They do not wish to dispute the views of the Committee that Sergeant Andrews was not guilty of deliberate inhumanity, but they consider that in disregarding the cries and failing to investigate for himself the reason for what must, in the words of the Committee, have been a very unusual clamour, both in extent and nature the Sergeant displayed culpable negligence. They also agree with

the Committee that the Head Constable and the constable who failed to convey to Sergeant Andrews a clearer understanding of the position which their better knowledge of the language must have given them, must share in this condemnation. The Government of India have instructed the Government of Madras that a prosecution should be instituted against Sergeant Andrews. It will rest with that Government what action, in view of the findings above recorded, should be taken in regard to the Head Constable and constable."

That ended an episode which at one stage appeared to develop into a second edition of Amritsar, but Lord Willingdon's immediate institution of an inquiry and a sympathetic declaration to deal fairly with the insurgents knocked the bottom out of the agitation threatening to rival the unrest created over the demand for enquiry into the Punjab disturbances. The last days of Lord Willingdon in the Southern Presidency saw such a complete rehabilitation of public confidence that when on tour in Malabar for a personal survey of the situation, he was received everywhere with the most cordial greetings, as a sincere well-wisher of the people and as one who had laboured with all energy and intellect for their well-being and happiness. The measures adopted by Lord Willingdon and the personal contact he established with the people proved so markedly effective that while the tenantry all over the country, specially in Burma, the United Provinces and the Punjab hurled defiance against authority throughout the years 1930-32, the regenerated Moplahs held aloft the flag of loyal concord and

planned progress, indifferent alike to the inspiring call of direct action and the touching appeals of impassioned communalism.



*IN DELHI*

*"It is the best appointment that could have been made. Lord Willingdon's personality would create the right atmosphere in India."*

—SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU.

*"Lord Willingdon's friendliness and tact will not only ease the present tension in India, but will enable India to get full measure of self-government. I am sure all sections of opinion will welcome the appointment."*

—SIR C. P. RAMASWAMY AIYAR.

*"Lord Willingdon has made friends everywhere."*

—SIR CHIMANLAL SETALVAD.

*"No Viceroy ever went to India with a riper knowledge of India."*

—THE DAILY TELEGRAPH.

*"The appointment is one of the rare occasions when it is possible to congratulate the Government without reservation."*

—THE DAILY EXPRESS.

## THE VICEROYALTY

INDIA was in the grip of a deepening economic depression and a most acute political restlessness when Lord Willingdon assumed its viceroyalty. The Agreement arrived at between Lord Willingdon's distinguished predecessor and the high-souled Congress dictator, after a period of widespread disharmony, had created semblance of a lull, but behind the truce were the seething forces of intransigence which the Prophet of Peace could hardly control. The Pact was endorsed by the Karachi Congress practically unanimously, but amidst an atmosphere of truculent hostility from the Congress to governmental authority. Though Lord Irwin had, beyond dispute, subdued the hostile forces, and the Pact practically meant *status quo ante*, the very fact that the highest authority of the British Government in India and the representative of the Crown, had entered into an agreement with the renowned leader of the proscribed organisation, by a complex mental process, created an illusion of triumph and a concomitant spirit of defiance. In any other country the Pact



would have shaken popular faith in the programme, in India it seemed to enhance its prestige; with the result that various political leaders started traversing the country like so many Alexanders, regretting the geographical limitations to their conquering abilities. The puritanic Congress leader anxious for concord made Viceregal Lodge and Government Houses his legitimate spiritual homes, and his ascetic processions were announced by the Press with a publicity campaign compared to which the publicity attempts of the American film world would have looked the very acme of modesty.

Mr. Gandhi for days and weeks continued to be the front-page item of the Press. Would he go to the Round Table Conference? There were hitches, there were moral difficulties; the officials were breaking the Pact; the Hindu-Muslim problem must be solved first; there must be a change of heart, and so on and so forth. Lord Willingdon, anxious to keep the plighted word of his predecessor, rightly submitted to the moral demands of the Saint of Sabarmati. Lengthy epistles of the Congress leader poured into the press day after day. Lord Willingdon permitted the correspondence to continue as long as Mr. Gandhi desired, allowed as many interviews as he required. The joint author of the Pact threatened a breakdown of the truce on issues of conscience. On the other hand, Bardoli peasants were getting desperate over the inconclusive end of the last struggle; labour in Bombay and elsewhere openly questioned Congress methods and tactics; in the United Provinces the land tenants were beginning to doubt Jawaharlal

Nehru, in the North-West Frontier Provinces the influence of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, the "Frontier Gandhi", was steadily weakening.

Mr. Gandhi tried to meet the situation by sending out "a charge sheet" against local officials of these places alleging breaches of the Delhi Pact. Lord Willingdon wanted Congress co-operation, but he could not, it was held, sacrifice the officers who stood by him and his predecessor with such ability and courage, and his reply to the "charge sheet", clear and unequivocal, refused to admit the right of anyone to interfere with the routine work of Government or to accommodate the demand for an independent arbitrator to judge official actions. The situation at once became tense, the political atmosphere was charged; wires between Whitehall and Simla kept buzzing; there were anxious conversations between Lord Willingdon and Mr. Gandhi. The time was fast approaching for the Indian delegates to leave for the Round Table Conference; but Mr. Gandhi was enigmatic. He was delayed at Simla. The first batch of delegates had already left Bombay, the second one was about to start. Mr. Gandhi created a classic denouement. The last train for the mail boat had left; the conversations grew more and more frantic, and after the tension had reached the peak point, and the situation made thoroughly dramatic, Mr. Gandhi announced his agreement with Lord Willingdon's offer and the special waiting train rushed him down the plains to the hospitable shores of Bombay. This was considered the first diplomatic triumph of Lord Willingdon, for he sacrificed no vital position nor sur-

rendered the interests of Government officers, and succeeded in evolving an agreement that satisfied the conscience of one who looks above everything else for a true heart.

Mr. Gandhi sailed to England in fascinating simplicity, with his goat and his loin cloth—the “minus fours” as he called them—but little else. He did many things in England ; he granted interviews to Charlie Chaplin, met country parsons, talked with college professors, discussed theosophy and Christ, the future of the world and the possibilities of non-violence, the woes of Lancashire and industry generally ; he spoke for the broadcast and gave autographs, but on constitutional questions he appeared non-committal. On federation, franchise, finance, trade rights, etc., etc., Mr. Gandhi’s discourses were short, pointed and diplomatic, but he listened long. Behind it all was flint determination with ears firmly fixed to the ground hearing the tramp of the masses in India. Lord Willingdon, as few other Viceroys before, knew its meaning and kept himself in readiness for the return of the Nazarene leader.

In India events were developing at a terrific speed. The grip of economic depression had gone beyond the experience of the previous two years ; trade went the downward path, commodity prices reached the rock-bottom rate, unemployment among the educated classes rose up alarmingly. Agrarian discontent thus combined with discontent among the educated unemployed with a result which could be easily gauged. Before Mr. Gandhi’s return the situation had reached an acute crisis ; in the United

Provinces the peasants had already commenced a no-rent campaign, at the Frontiers it was even more militant; in Bengal terrorism took an organised turn. Col. Simpson of the Indian Medical Service and Mr. Garlick, a Sessions Judge, were shot dead while at work in Calcutta; extensive preparations aiming at blowing up all important public buildings were discovered in Chittagong at the last moment; a widespread conspiracy to murder Europeans all through Bengal was revealed by chance; an attempt was made, among others, on the life of the Commissioner of Police in Calcutta. Amazing ramifications of terrorist organisations were brought to light in the United Provinces, in the Frontiers and Bengal there was a definite move to subvert the existing order. No state, thus challenged for its life, was going to take it lying down.

It is the opinion of constitutionalists that in issuing the drastic Ordinances Lord Willingdon did what the most liberal-minded administrator could not have avoided doing, for in taking the initiative against violence he was held definitely acting upto the highest conception of his charge and the best performance of his responsibilities. Some of the critics of his policy—critics who deserve respectful consideration—have doubted the wisdom of thus leading the offensive; but unfortunately these critics, including some of the members of the House of Commons, seem unaware of what Lord Willingdon knows from his experience in 1919-21, that popular discontent develops in India with a rapidity that defies calculation and that an insignificant stir, may, within the twink-

ling of an eye, become a widespread revolt approaching the fringe of revolution. The situation had passed the stage of discontent and looked heading forward to a revolt when Lord Willingdon intervened with extra-constitutional powers. If it were not for the Irwin-Gandhi Pact and his desire to observe it, consistent with state interests, in letter and in spirit, it is opined that he would have intervened at an earlier date, but whether intentionally or no the Pact had gone by the board long before the Congress leader's arrival, and there could be no truce when whole provinces, extensive and thickly populated, threatened the constitutional position of the Government. Subsequent developments showed that Lord Willingdon in thus taking up the initiative saved, with less loss of time, a situation believed more critical than what Lord Irwin had to face. In fact the whole movement was controlled before it could develop its most militant features, and so effectively that for practical purposes the country showed nothing but the healthiest reactions to the restorative measures.

In dealing with the agrarian upheaval and anarchist terrorism, the Viceroy, it is observed, had not directed any attack on the Congress, for he was merely dealing with a situation which only the organised power of the state could control. The Congress seemed to have misread the intentions in alleging that by the issue of the special Ordinances for counteracting Bengal terrorism and no-rent movement in the United Provinces and the Frontiers, the Government had launched an attack on itself. It is an easily understandable point that the Pact could

not mean abdication of Government's natural duties and renouncement of their statutory responsibilities.

The issue of these Ordinances naturally disturbed the Congress plenipotentiary in London; his utterances became more enigmatic than ever before. The Round Table Conference had met under the lengthening shadow of a financial crisis threatening to engulf the premier position of Great Britain among the world powers. While the Indian delegates were still on the high seas to England the pound came down with a resounding crash ; panics in the money market and stock exchange could be prevented by measures England had not experienced since the War. Lord Willingdon had to take recourse to the same type of emergency powers. Britain's finances were shaky enough for any evil design by France or America to bring them down to the verge of ruin. More, the British Government itself was very unstable ; the Labour had just made room for a temporary National Government. The Conference thus met with British politicians worried by the enormous proportions of domestic problems ; in the midst of the session England found itself in the throes of a general election, relegating the Indian constitutional discussions to the background. The Conference delegates were in a perpetual gloom. At a very early stage the Muslim delegates threatened a walk-out, and stayed back only for holding a watching brief. The return of an overwhelming Conservative element gave currency to weird rumours about the designs of the new Government to back out of the Indian

experiment. The Conference met very irregularly ; the various committees were reported as always involved in hitches ; for days together the open session of the Conference was not convened, and when convened at last it was Mr. Gandhi's day of silence. It was the final sitting held on 30th November 1931. The sitting commenced in the morning, but right through the long speeches few would come to grips with the direct constitutional issues. Mr. Gandhi sat huddled, a broken heap of a frail framework. The speeches continued from morning to midnight. After midnight Mr. Gandhi broke his silence, but his speech was shot through with a righteous bitterness of heart. No doubt was left after that speech of his forthcoming trek to the spiritual combats of Civil Disobedience.

Lord Willingdon, well in touch with the Conference and the policy of Mahatma Gandhi, saw the fast approaching clash. The clash was inevitable. Government had to maintain law and order at any cost ; the prestige and principles of Congress leadership required a counter-offensive against the Ordinances. Lord Willingdon knows the role of the Congress leadership and the circumstances in which it takes to direct action. There was no getting away from the situation. That a policy of conciliation could have avoided the clash was considered pure moonshine, for the combination of forces outside the control of both were such that there appeared little room for any kind of conciliation. Any negotiations with the Congress would have only accentuated the situation ; the publicity given to interviews and correspondence would have inevitably afforded publicity to

subversive propaganda and time for the mobilisation of hostile forces. The unanimous verdict of correct opinion has been that Lord Willingdon showed the highest statesmanship and administrative qualification in performing the extremely unpopular and unpleasant task of striking at civil Disobedience before it had time to consolidate its strength and galvanise its inspiration. Comparison with Lord Irwin in circumstances of a somewhat similar type but totally different intensity is misleading, for potentially the economic depression was worse at the end of 1930 than at the commencement of the Congress movement in early part of that year. When the Congress declared for Independence in December 1929 and voted for Civil Disobedience, the North West Frontiers were still peaceful, peasantry of the United Provinces was quiet, Bengal terrorism had not reached a dangerous pitch. Strictly speaking, politically, therefore, India was worse soon after the truce than at the beginning of the Civil Disobedience Movement in early 1930. It may seem paradoxical, but it is nevertheless true that Lord Willingdon had to deal with a more widespread peasant disorder during the continuation of the truce than his distinguished predecessor had to encounter at the height of the Congress war. The verdict of history, we have no doubt, will be in favour of Lord Willingdon, who at the head of a huge country teeming with a population easily excitable due to poverty, engulfed in an economic crisis of a most virulent species,—a situation objectively capable of revolution and anarchy—had a statesman's wisdom to forestall developments, and to take prompt



action, and though it involved the temporary renunciation of cherished principles and liberal traditions, dared, in the teeth of popular opposition, to do it in the discharge of a higher duty.

When Mr. Gandhi landed in Bombay on 28th December 1931 his popularity had reached the zenith. On the evening of his arrival he addressed a meeting of such terrible dimensions that, that meeting alone would have been sufficient finally to decide the Government's course of action. At the meeting Mr. Gandhi declared his eagerness to "die for co-operation", and there was not the slightest doubt of his personal sincerity of intention, but it was obvious to the most casual observer that his followers would have forced him to renew the struggle. The Working Committee, summoned immediately after his arrival, unfolded a long tale of grievances, discussed the Ordinances, talked about the arrests already made, pondered over the 'breaches' in the observance of the Pact. The result was a long epistle from Mr. Gandhi to the Viceroy for an interview to discuss the Ordinances and terms of co-operation; but Lord Willingdon offered to discuss plans for co-operation without reference to the Ordinances. The Ordinances were issued to meet a definite political crisis for which primarily neither Mr. Gandhi nor the Congress was responsible. Mr. Gandhi's pacific professions were genuine, nor could Lord Willingdon have ever suspected them, but other leaders, while Mr. Gandhi was away, had not dissociated from, and in a few cases actively associated with the no-rent campaign in the United Provinces and the Frontiers, and with these commitments they

could not have advanced Mr. Gandhi's policy of reconciliation. It can easily be surmised that they would have demanded the withdrawal of or unacceptable changes in the Ordinances, and the proposed interview would in all probability have ended in a break up. It was considered clearly more sagacious to precipitate the inevitable break, and so Lord Willingdon cut the correspondence short by keeping the Ordinances outside the field of discussion. The Congress Working Committee replied with a resolution amounting to an ultimatum as an alternative to the interview.

The last night of 1931 saw the Congress ultimatum, the 4th of January witnessed the issue of four new Ordinances. Mr. Gandhi was arrested on the same day, most of the prominent leaders were trapped immediately after. The energetic charge on the Congress organisation, though disapproved by progressive opinion, had no harmful reaction, for the arrests were welcomed as the logical consequence of defiance. The Government of India explained the whole political situation and their attitude towards it in a comprehensive statement issued on the eve of Mr. Gandhi's arrest wherein they said :

"The Government of India desire at the present crisis to place before the public the issues raised by the attitude of Congress and their declared intention to launch a general campaign of civil disobedience. It is the policy of His Majesty's Government and the Government of India to secure, in the framing of a constitution for India, the maximum co-operation

and agreement of all parties and interests in England and in India, and it was with this object that the procedure by Conference was adopted. In December 1929 the Congress deliberately rejected this method in favour of the barren road of non-co-operation, and a few months later they initiated the campaign of civil disobedience. The consequent loss of life and property and the damage caused to business and trade, are fresh in the memory of the public. The movement continued until the beginning of March 1931, by which time, owing partly to the measures taken to meet it and partly to the steadily decreasing support of the public, it had ceased to be a cause of anxiety to Government. In the meantime, the Prime Minister had made his declaration of the 19th of January 1931, and the Government of India, with the approval of His Majesty's Government, decided to make a further effort to secure the co-operation of the Congress in bringing to fruition the policy which he had announced. The result was the Delhi Settlement of March 5, 1931. The primary object of that Settlement was to give to Congress the opportunity of participation in the further discussions of the Round Table Conference, and through the anxious months that followed the Government of India kept that purpose steadfastly in view. They and the local Governments scrupulously observed the terms of the Settlement, and spared no effort to surmount the difficulties which the activities of Congress continuously placed in the way of the establishment of peaceful conditions. Some of those difficulties have been described in the statements issued by the

Government of the United Provinces, on the 14th December 1931 and by the Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province on the 24th and 30th of December 1931, but they were not confined to those provinces. They were evident in varying degrees in every province and the Government of India have on record many instances of specific breaches of the Delhi Settlement. It is, however, more to the general trend of Congress policy than to individual cases that they now wish to refer. Within a few days of the Delhi Settlement, two features became manifest, and have since been continuously in evidence. The first was the organised attempt to utilise the Settlement as a means of preparation for a further conflict. The second was the exploitation of the Settlement for the purpose of adding to the prestige of Congress, and of securing for them and its members a position of privilege, not enjoyed by any other organization or by members of the general public. Preparations for a renewal of civil disobedience have been openly carried on. Their excuse has been the assumed futility of the Round Table Conference and the bad faith of British statesmen. Allegations to this effect have continuously been made by the Congress press and by responsible Congress leaders. There has been no disposition to await events or to show a spirit of confidence without which true co-operation was impossible. Behind the screen of distrust so created, the Congress have conducted preparations for a new campaign. They have laid particular stress on the consolidation of their position in rural areas, and in every province

they have missed no opportunity to exploit the economic situation for that purpose. They have extended their volunteer organizations, and in the North-West Frontier Province they raised through Abdul Ghaffar Khan (who was recognised by the All-India Congress Committee as the leader of the Congress movement in that province) a very large body of men who were trained in expectation of a struggle with Government. The dangers of this "war mentality" were evident to Government, and Congress could not have been ignorant of them. They were, in fact, brought to the notice of Mr. Gandhi on several occasions, and, in particular, the menace to the Delhi Settlement, involved in the Red Shirt movement in the North-West Frontier Province and the agrarian agitation in the United Provinces, were strongly represented to him. While the Round Table Conference was still in session, a no-rent campaign was started in the United Provinces. A little later, preparations for a conflict in the North-West Frontier Province were so intensified as to create a situation of grave danger, to meet which Government were compelled to abandon the policy of forbearance which they had hitherto pursued.

"The exploitation of the Settlement for the purpose of securing to the Congress a privileged position has taken various forms. During the months that followed the Delhi Settlement, the Government of India had persistently to contest claims, the acceptance of which would have involved one or other of the following consequences: Fettering their own discretion and that of local Governments in the dis-

charge of their responsibilities for the maintenance of law and order ; placing members of the Congress who offended against the law in a favourable position in comparison with other members of the public in similar circumstances ; the recognition of Congress as a body whose advice must be accepted in matters relating to land revenue and rent ; generally, the acceptance of the principle that the Settlement of March 5th, gave to Congress a status which entitled it to a more favourable treatment than is accorded by Government to any other association—political or otherwise, and constituted it an intermediary between the Government and the people.

“Side by side with this intervention in the administration of the country, the Congress have in various ways interfered with private liberty and the freedom of trade. Under the guise of peaceful persuasion, they have employed the methods of intimidation and coercion to impose on individuals and concerns an intolerable system of tyranny.

“ In their determination to assist towards the peaceful solution of constitutional problems, the Government of India showed deliberate forbearance towards Congress activities. They refrained from denouncing the Delhi Settlement, although justification for such a course was given on many occasions, and they persisted with success in their endeavours to obtain a *Modus vivendi* which would enable Mr. Gandhi to attend the Round Table Conference. In the Statement delivered on the 1st of December last, the Prime Minister renewed the pledges he had given in the previous January. In one direction he made

an important advance. He gave an assurance that, with due regard to the necessary requirements of the Frontier, the North-West Frontier Province would be constituted a Governor's Province of the same status as other Governors' Provinces, and he further announced that, pending the introduction of the new constitution in other provinces, necessary steps would be taken, as soon as may be, to apply to the Province the provisions of the present Government of India Act relating to Governors' Provinces. This declaration was made with the full support of the Government of India and is an earnest of the good faith with which they have approached and will continue to approach the question of constitutional advance. A few days after the declaration of the Prime Minister, Parliament by an overwhelming majority accepted the policy which the National Government had announced. Among other commitments, was the undertaking to expedite the scheme of constitutional advance, and to this end to set up various Committees to deal with specific aspects of the problem. In pursuance of this pledge, the Committees are now in course of constitution and the representatives of British parties will sail for India on January 15th. The Government of India, on their part, are doing all that is possible to push forward the work. In particular, they are taking steps which, they believe, will secure for the North-West Frontier Province within a few months the present status of a Governor's Province.

“The position when Mr. Gandhi returned to India was thus briefly as follows. His Majesty's

Government and Parliament were committed to a scheme of constitutional reform which had been accepted as reasonable by the great majority of Delegates to the Round Table Conference. They had further given an undertaking that they would make every effort to overcome as quickly as possible the practical difficulties in the way of its immediate realisation and, in pursuance of this, they had set up the machinery by which some of those difficulties can be solved. The Government of India were pledged to assist and expedite the work by all means in their power. Mr. Gandhi had given no clear indication of whether he or the Congress, whom he represented, were willing to co-operate in the fulfilment of the scheme of His Majesty's Government. In the meantime, Congress had precipitated a conflict with Government in the United Provinces and in the North-West Frontier Province, and proposals had been initiated to start a campaign elsewhere for the boycott of British goods and institutions. The main issue before Government was whether Congress were prepared or not to co-operate in further constitutional discussions; and it was essential to ascertain their attitude and that of Mr. Gandhi towards this fundamental question. It was plain that there could be no co-operation in any accepted sense of the term so long as activities in the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province continued. It was also clear that there could be no co-operation under a continuous menace of the renewal of civil disobedience. The telegram of Mr. Gandhi of the 1st of January and the resolutions of the Working Com-



mittee of Congress passed under his advice have left no doubt on this issue. Under the specific threat of a general renewal of civil disobedience the programme of which has been announced the Government of India have been asked to accept conditions which would make Mr. Gandhi the arbiter of measures necessary for the maintenance of law and order, and which would leave Congress free to pursue their subversive activities as seemed fit to them. The measure of the co-operation which Congress would extend in return for the acceptance of these conditions is indicated by the announcement of the Working Committee. They have pronounced the declaration of the Prime Minister to be wholly unsatisfactory and inadequate in terms of the Congress demands, and they have demanded that if their co-operation be accepted, free scope be given to them to prosecute their claim to complete independence. There was clearly no alternative left to the Government of India but to reject these demands, and to take all measures that were necessary to meet the campaign of civil disobedience.

“Mr. Gandhi has stated as part of his creed that civil disobedience is not only the natural right of the people, especially when they have no effective voice in their own Government, but that it is also an effective substitute for violence or armed rebellion. Experience has proved time and again that in this country civil disobedience cannot be carried on without violence and Mr. Gandhi himself has spoken of the sacrifice of a million lives. The civil disobedience as conceived and as practised by Congress is

to paralyse the administration, and to inflict the maximum of harm on Government, regardless of the loss it may entail to private individuals. It is opposed to all constitutional principles and if it achieved its object, it would make any form of Government impossible. In using their full resources against it the Government of India are, therefore, fighting the battle, not only of the present Government, but of the Governments of the future. It is particularly incumbent upon them at the present juncture to oppose with their full power a movement which would make constitutional advance impossible. It is their duty to hand over to the new order a working administration, and to this end to resist, with all their might, forces which would create a state of anarchy and chaos. The peaceful progress of India depends on the maintenance of the authority of Government and of respect for the law whatever that Government may be, and the present Government of India would fail lamentably in their obligations to their successors if, during a period of transition, they allowed this fundamental principle to go by default, or were content to permit the usurpation of their functions by any political organization. An issue of hardly less importance is whether a political organization is to be allowed by lawless means to impose its will on the public, large sections of which deny its authority and oppose its pretensions. Government would fail in their duty were they to countenance the claims of Congress to control and domination, or permit them, in effect, to assume the position of a parallel government.

“The issues before the country are plain. On the one side there is a body to which has twice been offered an opportunity, without precedent, of assisting towards the political advancement of the country. It has twice rejected the offer and has twice chosen to follow the path of destruction rather than of constructive effort. It is determined to inflict untold harm on the country in the pursuit of a position of domination which whole classes of the people will not accept. It persists in methods which, if successful, would uproot the foundations of all government, and would render impossible any system of orderly administration now and in the future.

“On the other side, there is the opportunity of co-operation in the great work of constitutional reform to which His Majesty's Government and Parliament are pledged. The Government of India are equally pledged to press forward the work, and this they will do undeterred by the threats of Congress. While they will take every measure that is necessary for the suppression of a lawless movement and for the protection of public and private liberty, they will also spare no effort to bring to completion the policy of His Majesty's Government. In this task they appeal for the co-operation of all who have at heart the peace and happiness of the people of India and who, rejecting the methods of revolution, desire to follow to its certain goal the path of constitutional advance.”

In the ensuing months the Ordinances became the target of attack thousands, were arrested and sent to jail. The movement continued for some

time with vigour, but its scope and extent had been measured by the end of the first month ; at the end of the third month it was considered definitely on the decline ; by the end of six months, when the Ordinances lapsed, governmental authority had been completely established, 'no-rent' in the United Provinces had died down and the Frontiers had been restored to tranquillity. The work was by no means so easy, but the policy of Lord Willingdon was so effective that on the lapse of the numerous Ordinances a single Ordinance containing about eighty clauses, most of which were never utilised, replaced the string of preceding measures, and a few months later the Legislative Assembly, in giving *post facto* sanction to the policy by willingly consenting to put on the statute book an act incorporating the most important clauses of the Ordinances, established that people's elected representatives were behind the much-criticised and decidedly unpleasant and unwelcome Ordinance Raj.

It is necessary here to dwell at some length on the criticism against the precipitation of the Congress-Government issue. The Congress movement forms a vital part of Lord Willingdon's Viceroyalty and decisions thereupon challenge his administrative wisdom. The criticism sometimes comes from people with a reputation for balanced judgment, and as typical of this we shall quote Mr. John Coatman in "Years of Destiny": "It is possible that Mr. Gandhi might have been able to keep the Working Committee of the Congress in hand had Lord Willingdon seen him and discussed the Bengal and other Ordinances with him, but it is doubtful. ....

On the other hand, there is very little to doubt that Mr. Gandhi desired peace. He knows that there are forces at work in India which he cannot control, and that these forces if they once gain the upper hand, will lead India straight to violent chaos..... It is more than likely, then, that Mr. Gandhi finding himself in the presence of such forces, was more than ready to abstain from further civil disobedience campaigns, for he had always abhorred violence, often though his own acts have directly led to it. His whole method of communication with the Viceroy was not tactful, but in view of the vast importance of the issues at stake it is reasonable to ask whether Lord Willingdon handled the situation in the best possible manner. Mr. Gandhi wanted to discuss certain things, particularly the Ordinances, which Lord Willingdon did not want to discuss, indeed, thought it dangerous to discuss. It might have been dangerous, but, on the other hand true safety does not always lie in the avoidance of risks, and in 1931 Lord Irwin had discussed everything with Mr. Gandhi in the fullest and freest manner and refused to yield to him on any point in which he thought the safety of India would be imperilled by doing so." In "The Indian Riddle" Mr. Coatman discusses at some length whether, in the given conditions, Mr. Gandhi would have revived Civil Disobedience or not and the consequences if he had not started the campaign. We shall quote from the point where he assumes that Mr. Gandhi would not have revived the struggle. Says Mr. Coatman: "From this (non-resumption of the struggle) very important consequences flow. In

the first place, Mr. Gandhi must inevitably suffer loss of prestige, which would mean that his stature would be reduced to something more nearly approaching equality with his fellow Congress leaders than before. That even if Mr. Gandhi himself had been unwilling to revive the civil disobedience movement, even after his disappointment in England, certain of his colleagues would have found themselves in a position to do so without his co-operation. . . . There are reasons for believing that Mr. Gandhi either would not have undertaken such a movement or if he would have done so with the greatest reluctance and only under pressure from others. This, however, is only one reading of the situation, because Mr. Gandhi's actions have always been very difficult to calculate, and those observers may be right who believe that he intended to revive non-co-operation and civil disobedience. But whatever the truth of this may be, it is perfectly certain that the other Congress leaders would have revived the civil disobedience movement, and even if Lord Willingdon had consented to see Mr. Gandhi he could still not have prevented trouble from breaking out. It is just possible—but just possible—that if he had seen Mr. Gandhi, the latter might personally have been kept out of the movement which would thus have started under the very heavy handicap. Here, however, we are in the realm of speculation, whereas Lord Willingdon had to deal with hard facts of the situation". Further, in presenting the defensive side of Lord Willingdon's administration Mr. Coatman says: "In criticising the present policy of the Government of India

this should be remembered (the previous year's Chit-tagong and Peshawar) because there is much validity in the claim that Lord Willingdon and his advisers after all were acting on the principle that prevention is better than cure. There is no reason to disbelieve that had such vigorous action not been taken against Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders and their followers a period of agitation and violent upheaval, at least comparable to that of 1930-31, and in all likelihood, far surpassing it, would have supervened." Mr. Glorney Bolton in "The Tragedy of Gandhi" expresses the same opinion perhaps somewhat more forcibly. There are others taking the same view. Mr. Bolton says that Government could have made Mr. Gandhi their strongest ally but "they chose to tread him down. I believe that he left London still prepared to wrestle with his Working Committee for the sake of peace. The Government of India would not allow him his opportunity. They would not give him time—in Disraeli's phrase—to educate his party; with the result that Englishmen suddenly found themselves committed to a dual policy of repression and reform."

Now let us examine this type of sober criticism in the light of the actual situation. We may at once grant, as we have said before, that Mr. Gandhi desired peace and we agree with Mr. Coatman that Mr. Gandhi is fully aware that the forces at work may any moment get an upper hand which would mean an end of all that he stands for; but the crucial question is whether he could have succeeded in avoiding the struggle. It should be obvious that his

colleagues would have stepped in the moment he were to show reluctance to lead. Mr. Gandhi, consistent with the principles he stands for, would at the time have prevented a purely political leadership taking place of his lead based on Truth, Non-violence and undoubted moral grandeur. His past record establishes this beyond doubt. He did not desire the inauguration of Civil Disobedience even in 1930, but inaction on his part would have thrown his leadership overboard and the principles of non-violence and truth so dear to him. So he immediately assumed command. This is a historic fact. In the present case history would have repeated itself. In his letter to Lord Willingdon, loyal as he is to his colleagues, he definitely refused to dissociate himself from the actions of Congress leaders during his absence. Lord Willingdon could not have withdrawn or modified the Ordinances and Mr. Gandhi could never have succeeded in getting his colleagues to accept them. Either Mr. Gandhi would have been compelled to lead the movement or his colleagues would have done so, and as already shown from past experience Mr. Gandhi would not have renounced the leadership; the clash would have been inevitable.

Even if we granted that in certain circumstances Mr. Gandhi would have rejected the counsels of his friends and gone virtually into political wilderness, we are forced to the decisive question whether it would have been an advantage to the administration and the peace of the country. It is extremely doubtful if in Mr. Gandhi's absence his immediate lieutenants, with the political situation such as it was, would have



started under any appreciable handicap, and even if this hypothetical handicap were granted, there were still other very serious considerations which could not be ignored. Mr. Gandhi has certain merits which few other Congress leaders possess. It is true, for example that while all Congress leaders pay lip sympathy to non-violence, there are only a few who sincerely believe in it and effectively preach it. Besides, for the purposes of peace there is no Congress leader so fair-minded; no leader who would welcome peace possibilities so readily as Mr. Gandhi. As such any hypothetical benefit derived by isolating Mr. Gandhi from the movement would have been heavily counter-balanced by these considerations. The leadership of Mr. Gandhi, based on great principles and moral restraints, is decidedly preferable to any other radical direct action leadership. This is all, however, beside the point for Mr. Gandhi would not have allowed himself to be thus isolated, and the negotiations would only have given time to the numerous Congress organisations to mobilise and strengthen their position. Again, it is questionable to say that Lord Irwin ran a risk in negotiating with Mr. Gandhi at the beginning of 1931. Lord Irwin could agree to the withdrawal of certain Ordinances, because, in fact, there was little need for them at the time; their purpose had been largely served and the little need that there was had been done away with by the conditions precedent to their withdrawal. As against this at the time of the Willingdon-Gandhi negotiations the movement had just begun and the need for the Ordinances would have continued even

if the entire Congress were to give an assurance of the utmost loyalty ; for the ordinances were directed, to begin with, against terrorism and no-rent. The terrorist movement in Bengal, it must be admitted, does not owe its inspiration to the Congress and as such no Congress leadership could have influenced its control, while the no-rent movement is historically antecedent to, and was, upto a few years ago, independent of the Congress. As such Congress influence, even if it were wholly placed at the disposal of Government,—an assumption far too big for practical value because, if for no other reason than the continuance of their influence among the villagers, the Congress could never have repudiated the peasant struggle—would not have succeeded in bringing the United Provinces and the Frontier peasantry to confidence. Thus the situation which Lord Willingdon had to tackle was very materially different in intensity from that at the fag-end of the first movement when Lord Irwin admitted peace negotiations. Those who have implicit faith in Irwinism may find a conclusive reply to their doubts in the public pronouncement of Lord Irwin at Leeds within a fortnight of the arrest of Mr. Gandhi, that if he himself were placed in a similar situation he would have acted in the same manner as Lord Willingdon. It was no mere empty flattery of his successor.

It is a characteristic phenomenon that while all the non-Congress elements combine in condemning direct action, they also unite, on the principle of freedom of action, in attacking the measures to counteract it. While they join in their abhorrence of Civil Resistance

the moment positive action against the author of the creed is taken they combine in demanding his release on the principle of freedom of movement. The story was repeated in the present case also. Within a few days of the imprisonment of the Congress dictator the Liberals issued a manifesto demanding his release, other parties followed suit, the press clamoured for it. Lord Willingdon was prepared to release the leader if the movement was withdrawn, but that was impossible at the time. The agitation continued in the press, in the legislatures and even on the floors of the House of Commons and Sir Samuel Hoare made a final statement in the Commons that : "there will be no question of making bargain with the Congress as a condition of its co-operation."

It would have been easy enough for Lord Willingdon to meet the insistent sentiments of great Liberal theoreticians and the clamour of British Labourites in political wilderness to gain their applause, but true Liberalism and political generosity are tested in history by standards of effects and not immediate applause. On arrival in India the main problem before Lord Willingdon was of constitutional reform, and to its solution everything else including jail delivery, had to be subordinated. With this purpose fixed, the administrator had to remove every difficulty, imminent or potential, hindering the spirit of progress as embodied in the Round Table. Now, what was the Congress position in relation to the reforms proposed? It boycotted the first session of the London Conference and instead erected moral barri-

cases of civil disobedience. On the eve of their collapse Lord Irwin entered into a pact to ensure peace and smooth working of the constitution under anvil, but these hopes were shattered. At the second session of the Round Table Conference the sole delegate of the Congress held aloft the banner of Independence despite the Irwin-Gandhi Pact, the first condition of which had debarred any talk of independence and enunciated all the important safeguards as regards the Military and Foreign Relations. On return to India he found the Congress forces seething and before long set out full steam for civil disobedience. Lord Willingdon could afford to waste no time. He could afford no third and fourth and fifth revival of the movement. The Congress was to be brought to the path of goodwill and the constitution insured against assault. The new governmental framework, especially in the provinces, provides, broadly speaking, far greater opportunities for harassment than the past constitution. Unless he was to chance indefinite postponement of the new scheme, Lord Willingdon had no alternative but to force the issue at a rapid pace to enable the launching of the federal boat on the calm seas of healthy political consciousness.

It was this reason and no evil design unnecessarily to humiliate and roll in dust the premier political force of the nation that explains Lord Willingdon's conduct during the first two years of his Viceroyalty. Its restorative effect is a living fact of public life to-day. Within nine months of the struggle Government credit had risen so high that all the provincial heads,

district and divisional officers and the Viceroy himself could evoke the most rousing receptions in their extensive tours for consolidating goodwill and co-operating forces of the country. Receptions which only Lord Hardinge could inspire and Lord Curzon command, were said to be the daily experience of Lord Willingdon when the Congress sympathisers were still claiming a victory for their cause. Whether in Bombay his first Indian love or in picturesque Baroda, among the delights of Calcutta and in the crowded districts of Lahore and Allahabad, he was received with an enthusiasm which left no doubt about the trend of popular feeling. Lord Willingdon continued the policy which had marked his outstanding popularity in Bombay and Madras, for wherever he went, interviews with leading citizens, princes and politicians, landlords, industrialists, men of letters and university professors were the dominant items of his programme; formal ceremonies were cut down to the minimum. None was more competent to advise Lord Willingdon and, therefore, none in more intimate touch with the Viceroy than the Indian leaders engaged in these diverse fields of action. It was this intimate contact with responsible opinion that enabled him to forge sanction in the Legislative Assembly to measures like the Ottawa Agreement, the Ordinance Bill, the Reserve Bank Bill and a host of other enactments so bitterly opposed by pro-Congress opinion.

The swiftness and frequency of changes occurring in the Indian political life often make the kaleidoscope appear a very stable and hoary institution. The

occasion for the remark is the manner, surpassing all calculations and predictions, in which the distinguished prisoner of Yeravda, removed out of the political play-house, suddenly sprung into the centre of the stage with all the flood-lights and foot-light centred on him. The Congress life was running the routine course of technical violation of the Ordinances, flag salutation ceremonies, tiny processions, faint-hearted picketing—all for inviting arrest and imprisonment. It had become part of the daily life of the big cities and was taken for granted just as one would a certain number of arrests for other offences. There was not much life left in the traffic, no excitement in it at all; in the district towns and villages everything was as quiet as quiet could be; the movement of politics appeared as slow as in 1923–26. And then as if with the waving of a wand the Prisoner of Independence became the Star-light of Depressed India. The occasion was the Prime Minister's "Communal Award."

At the second session of the Round Table Conference, it will be recalled, Mr. Gandhi opposed separate electorates to any but the Muslim community and made a determined stand against reservation of seats for the Depressed Classes. Communal representation was a vexed question, for the Indian delegation came to no agreement, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, at last undertook to frame a scheme, which, unless an agreed decision were reached, would be binding on all communities. On return to India the delegation could find no common solution. The Premier's Award announced in August 1932 pro-

posed, among other things, to reserve a number of seats for the Depressed Classes in a special constituency for a specified number of reserved seats. Five months before the publication of the Award, Mr. Gandhi had written to the Secretary of State intimating his decision to resist with his life the erection of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes, which he held would drive a wedge through the Hindu society and accentuate the degradation of the Depressed Classes. . On 18th August, the day following the publication of the Award, Mr. Gandhi confirmed to the Prime Minister his previous decision and announced that unless by 20th September the Award as affecting the Harijans was changed he would enter upon a fast unto death, as a supreme atonement for Harijan degradation.

On the day appointed Mr. Gandhi entered upon an epic fast that roused the soul of India. Hindu and Depressed Class leaders met in feverish discussion; India followed the Conference proceedings with tense excitement; for days together during and after the fast the newspaper world had no more thrilling topic for its posters. The whole atmosphere was charged with anxiety. Days for national fasts were appointed, national prayer days announced, there were packed meetings again after a rest of eight months. Leaderlings, freaks, spiritual quacks, joined the Prince of Yeravda in his transcendent penance. India had discovered its life-long cancer, Hinduism its greatest degradation. The upshot was an agreement, reserving 148 seats for Harijans in the general constituency instead of 71 in a separate

constituency as provided for in the Premier's Award. The Agreement was accepted by the Premier.

We are concerned here with Lord Willingdon's attitude towards this quick-moving panorama. The projected fast unto death did one great thing undoubtedly—it released the forces of social reform a century of education and modern ideas had generated but lacked the genius of a leadership to mobilise and direct them. Lord Willingdon, than whom is no greater champion of the submerged and the down-trodden, saw a great opportunity to co-operate with Mr. Gandhi in directing these beneficial forces for a swift social transformation, and so not only did he give the fullest scope for discussion to all the leaders during the fast, but after the agreement had been arrived at, though strictly speaking, there was little need to continue the privilege, he sanctioned the fullest opportunity to Mr. Gandhi to issue, while still behind the prison bars, any number of statements and to grant any number of private and press interviews. It served a double purpose. It helped further to cure a running sore in the body politic of the Indian society and gave a most beneficial turn to the youthful energies and idealism of the rising generation anxious to serve its country but lacked a constructive opportunity. Lord Willingdon's policy in Bombay and Madras is enough to show that he knew that the crux of the problem was economic, and though he did not and, in truth, could not direct the Hindu leaders to concentrate their energies on this fact, it is easy enough to see that the freedom he deservedly gave to Mr. Gandhi, in contravention of



all precedent and practice was for something more than securing temple-entry for Harijans. Mr. Gandhi, however, looking more to change of heart than anything else massed all the popular forces on the issue of entry into Guruvayur Temple.

Days of agitation, the excitement of the unofficial referendum, and the resultant strife, followed the fast, and the question of supporting the Temple Entry Bill in Madras and the Untouchables' general disabilities bill in the Assembly engrossed the attention of the great Hindu masses and put to a severe test the sagacity and tact of Lord Willingdon. Would the Viceroy sanction introduction of Mr. Ranga Iyer's Bill? Would he grant permission for the Bill in the Madras Legislative Council? These were serious questions for with refusal of sanction the most dynamic opinion in the country would consider him insincere, weak and all the rest of it, he would be a reactionary hindering the progress of society, helping perpetuation of the abominable Harijan condition. Yet with grant of sanction, the wrath of loyal orthodoxy would be roused, the most stable element in society would be alienated. Reformers knew that Lord Willingdon would have belied his past if he had played for safety, and though he could have been superficially justified in banking on the guaranteed loyalty of the orthodoxy instead of meeting the purpose of erstwhile opponents, it was not the guaranteed loyalty or the declared hostility that decided the issue. If the Harijan cause was worthy of championship it mattered little if the proclaimed soldiers of Independence were the instruments of the championship or if the

unreasoning but loyalist orthodoxy were rubbed the wrong way. Lord Willingdon took the only course open to his liberal traditions in granting permission to the more comprehensive All-India Bill of Mr. Ranga Iyer, but refusing it to the one for the Madras Council on the local temple-entry issue. The reason for this refusal was not, as at first interpreted, the Viceroy's opposition to a welcome move, but because in its operation the local bill affected religious institutions, undoubtedly of Madras, but of an all-India character. The fact that to Mr. Ranga Iyer's similar bill in the Assembly Lord Willingdon accorded immediate sanction has shown that far from being against such a healthy reform, consistent with the higher interests of the state, he can go a great length to clear the way for such progress. The overwhelming opposition the bill roused all over India no doubt sealed its fate, but the propaganda of educating public opinion which followed the measure on its stormy journey did incalculable good to the cause of reform. Lord Willingdon who, in supercession of all jail rules, perhaps for the first time in the history of penitentiary, permitted a political prisoner to lead a public movement, supported by the administration at every stage of its progress, can justly occupy a place along with Mr. Gandhi as a Harijan champion.

Lord Willingdon's diplomacy as illustrated above succeeded in diverting militant nationalist energies into constructive channels, but though the Congress is the most efficiently organised nationalist force, outside it are the cross-currents of the Hindu

Mahasabhaïtes, Muslim Leaguers, the peasantry, the proletariat, etc., etc., each of which is a force to be reckoned with, each of which sometimes presents difficulties quite as formidable as the Congress, occasionally more formidable. Mention can only be made of some of the outstanding features of the period.

Right at the beginning of the Viceregal career the entire political front was in a state of collapse. We have seen before how the Congress plenipotentiary threatened non-co-operation and how Lord Willingdon got him to jump into a waiting boat for the London Conference; how the Conference met under a lasting gloom and dispersed with the most outstanding problems unsolved. In India itself there was no end of trouble. The widespread peasant insurrection in Burma which started in 1931 had yet to be subdued. In the fastnesses of the luxuriant forests of that wealthy province the rebels could defy the modern military machinery and the best equipped armed forces. The situation was delicate not only because the rebellion was extensive and ruinous but its mishandling would have complicated the political issues before the province. Lord Willingdon however displayed none of the panicky nervousness that is the hall-mark of definite failure; he had dealt with a similar uprising in Madras only a few years before. The military operations sanctioned by Lord Irwin were continued with vigour, and the whole area was restored to peace with such success that the operations produced no ugly reactions and the question of the subjugation of

the rebellion was kept well outside of the constitutional issues.

In beautiful Kashmir the difficulties were more complicated. The State had already gone through a prolonged period of upheaval and peace had been restored after a desperate struggle. Everything was hopeful, when there was an outburst of fanatical lawlessness. The causes of these outbursts have been variously interpreted but they hardly give a clue to the fundamental background responsible for the upheaval. As a ruler His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir is extremely large-hearted and generous and cannot be accused of religious fanaticism; he holds enlightened and up-to-date views on his responsibilities and duties and the stamp of his progressive rule can be seen in every department of the State. The basic reason for the flare up was the plight of the peasantry due to fall in price rates of agricultural producer. That the majority of the peasants happen to be Muslims is a historical accident for which neither His Highness the Maharaja nor his officers were responsible; they were also not responsible for the fact that the majority of landlords, businessmen, merchants and other better class people were Hindus. The outburst against the Hindus was in the nature of an unreasoning hatred of the wealthy by the poverty-stricken Muslim farmers. That was the origin of the disturbances which shook the entire State for months.

The first disturbances had been brought under control by the end of 1930, but there was an outburst again in a few months; the Muslims suddenly

declared a holy war. Muslim "Jathas" from the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab were led into the State to fan the flames of raving incendiarism and to unchain the bloodhounds of murder ; Muslim fanatics all over the country actively sympathised with the actions of their co-religionists in the Hindu State ; Muslim journals, the more fanatical of them, accounted in flaring headlines and with scarcely hidden joy the progress of butchery and the achievements of fratricidal war. The Hindus were in a state of suspicious rage when the rumour went round that there was a deep conspiracy to confiscate the State. Hostile forces of religious bigotry were unleashed before the Government of India sent out a strong military detachment to reinforce the State Army. It was a task of extreme delicacy. If the military action were to result in a heavy loss of Muslim life it would have had extensive repercussions on Muslim political atmosphere ; if the Military were not to succeed in restoring order, Hindu fears and suspicions would have been strengthened, leading to political complications not only in British India but also in the Hindu States, naturally sympathetic towards a ruler of their religious fold and one of the greatest among them in his dire calamity. At one stage of their operations the British Military came to the verge of conflict with a defiant Muslim "jatha". The situation was pregnant with extremely serious possibilities, but the military were given the strictest orders as far as possible to act as a moral force and to avoid clash with the civil population, and it was cleverly avoided by the display of the machine guns, armoured cars,

tanks and aeroplanes, which was sufficient to bring the "jathas" and their supporters to their senses. After six months of operations normal conditions were restored, Hindu fears and Muslim grievances allayed, and His Highness the Maharaja gave further proof of love of his subjects by declaring an extensive amnesty and by inaugurating a Legislative Council based on a wide franchise.

While Kashmir was thus causing anxiety the scheme of Federation itself threatened a collapse. The Indian States under the great leadership of His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner<sup>1</sup> had supported the federal scheme with a considerable amount of enthusiasm at the first Round Table Conference, but on their return to India some of the important Princes began to flag, and His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala<sup>2</sup> was the first to come into the open to warn his brother Princes against "the danger to their existence" involved in the Federal Structure Committee's plan. He declared that the smaller States were bound to suffer the fate of the smaller German principalities

1. Lieutenant-General His Highness Maharajadhiraj Raj Rajeshwar Narendra Shiromani Maharajah Shri Sir Ganga Singhji Bahadur, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., G.B.E., K.C.B., A.D.C., LL.D. Maharaja of Bikaner, signed the Treaty of Versailles on behalf of India, represented India in the League of Nations Assembly, for some time Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, delegate to the Round Table Conference etc. etc.

2. Lieutenant-General His Highness Farzand-i-khas Daulat-i-Inglishia, Mansur-ul-zaman Amir-ul-Umra Maharaja Dhiraj Raj Rajeshwar Shri Maharaja-i-Rajgan Sir Bupinder Singh Mohinder Bahadur Yadu Vanshavatans Bhatti Kul Bhushan, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., G.B.E. A.D.C., represented the Ruling Princes of India at the Imperial War Conference and the Imperial War Cabinet in June 1918, at the League of Nations in 1925, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes 1926-30 and 1933-34, delegate to the Round Table Conference etc. etc.

under the confederation of 1815 and disappear from the map of India, and suggested the advisability of a union of Indian States directly in relationship with the Crown. In mutual consultation with a number of other princes the Maharaja of Patiala further sponsored a modified scheme of federation, namely, that, instead of each Ruler entering the federation singly on his own terms, the matter should be discussed by the Chamber of Princes and the terms for their entry should be so settled that the Princes as a body should form one group of their own and join the federation only for certain specific purposes and to the extent that they consented to do so. This gave a new aspect to the whole question.

The opinion expressed by His Highness came as a bomb-shell, for he commanded great influence among his brother princes, and only recently had been the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. Apart from the Chamber where he wields an influence far more effective than is realised by the outside world, the Maharaja has natural abilities of leadership which could not be ignored. It is not possible till the confidential talks and correspondence are at some future date revealed to the world to know how Lord Willingdon got round a revolt under such auspices, but it is a fact that little more was heard on the subject after the famous manifesto, and it is also a fact hardly unknown that Lord Willingdon's intervention prevented development of a move which would have perhaps seen an end of the federal concept.

This brings us to the other side of the dual policy of Lord Willingdon which has come in for

criticism from opposite quarters. Congressmen say if 'repression' is a reality, the reforms must be a make-belief; the Tories declare if India cannot be ruled without Ordinances she is surely unfit for assuming greater responsibility. The dual policy is the core and centre of Lord Willingdon's leadership and as such requires clearly to be defined, thoroughly analysed and impartially judged. To realise the foundation of the policy an understanding of the fundamentals of British Liberalism and its historic role in the development of Parliamentary Constitution is essential. The historic role of British Liberals has throughout been on the one hand to meet a critical situation by a liberal advance and on the other to hold in check forces nullifying the effects of the advance. It stands for weakening the forces of disorder by enlisting in the new advance the support of the very leadership of chaos, the idea being to prove to the recalcitrants the possibility of a steady advance by constitutional means and to remove the bottom out of the very causes of disorder and anarchy.

Far from renouncing the ideals and methods of Liberalism Lord Willingdon has thus been their most powerful and practical exponent. While busy establishing order out of the confusion of the idealist, nationalist and communalist temper Lord Willingdon's best talents and energies were also engaged in the constructive solution of the complex problems of the federal achievement. The Second Round Table Conference was over towards the end of 1931, the Burma Conference in the middle of January 1932. Both the Conferences had left behind the detailed working out



of major issues. The financial aspect of the separation of Burma was later investigated by a Committee, whose careful report, issued in September 1932, Lord Willingdon submitted to a tribunal for such decisions as would command the general confidence of India and Burma. A referendum was also taken on the issue of separation—first of its kind in the British administration of India and Burma. In India, three efficient committees were busy consulting Indian opinion on the three questions of Franchise, Finance, and the position of the States under the federal constitution. The Franchise Committee under Lord Lothian toured the whole country taking evidence and it is significant that pro-Congress journals gave liberally of their space for the reports of the Committee's proceedings and for extensive comment thereon. The Committee recommended an increase of the electorate from 7 million to 36 million; property continued to be the main qualification, but certain educational attainments sanctioned the power of voting; special electorates were also created for women, while the aborigines were franchised with lower qualifications. The Federal Finance Committee, with Sir Eustace Percy as chairman, submitted its report in May 1932 laying out an elaborate financial arrangement for the Federal and Provincial Governments which it is hoped will assure the smooth working of the new constitution. The States Committee traced the origin and development of the political relationship between the States and the British Indian Government and laid down broad principles for an equitable financial adjustment for federal finance.

Under the chairmanship of the Viceroy a Consultative Committee composed of nineteen representative members of the Round Table Conference was formed in early 1932 for filling in the federal picture, and though considerably hampered due to some of the Muslim members refusing to discuss any proposals till the Communal Award was announced, it successfully went through a considerable amount of work. The Viceroy effectively guided the Committee by laying out his general plans and proposals, and the work of this Committee not only kept important members of the Conference continuously engaged in constitution building, but made the path considerably smooth for the Third Round Table Conference.

The separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency and its constitution into a full-fledged province was one of the fourteen Muslim demands. The British delegation to the Round Table Conference was willing to meet it if a scheme could be devised for making it financially self-supporting. A Committee investigated the subject and devised a scheme by which Sind, without being an undue burden on the federal Government, could be an independent province, with a legislature, a Governor and a Secretariat of its own. The outcome of all the discussion has been that a proposal, outside the realm of practical politics at one stage, has been brought within realm of realities without unduly exacerbating the feelings of the minority community in the province.

The most important item of the progressive reforms and the first to be completed and set into working condition was the reforms scheme for the

North-West Frontier Province. The Frontier Province had been the storm-centre of the Red-shirt movement in 1930 ; for full three days the mob in Peshawar had held the city under its thumb and the atmosphere was none too quiet even after the signing of the Government-Congress Pact. The Red Shirts continued active all along ; a Special Ordinance had been issued before the Indian delegation returned home from the second session of the Conference, and as the other side of the policy, at the end of the Conference Mr. MacDonald announced that Frontier Reforms would be immediately inaugurated. This had been for years one of the important demands of nationalist India, and the Viceroy, amidst unrest went forward with the scheme ; electoral rules, voters' list, etc., were quickly prepared, and the elections, in the midst of the Congress movement, were attended by none of the ugly features commonly witnessed in similar circumstances. The experiment is of the most daring yet the most essential. The Frontiers are, as has been often said, a store-house of powder magazine, the danger spot of the Empire. The citizen, easily excitable, have strong affinities with the turbulent tribes across the borders ; events on the other side have strong reactions across here ; events on this side have strong reactions across the borders. The Frontiers have not yet come fully under the influence of modern civilization, and not being yet freed from feudal ties, they lack a strong and stable middle class. To institute reforms in such a province may seem a dangerous and unnecessary experiment. And though dangerous it is, in the sense that the legislature

is lacking the traditions of responsibility and the Ministers are unaccustomed to exercise of power, it was certainly necessary to get together all the co-operating elements in the common national service. As will readily be admitted it is better to enlist their services than to deny the fulfillment of deserving ambitions and rightful aspirations till driven to the methods of despair and obstruction. The introduction of reforms has so completely changed the political atmosphere that Lord Willingdon in a speech later in the Legislative Assembly said : "In place of dissatisfaction we have contentment and the course is set fair for orderly and harmonious progress." This observation in connection with the powder-magazine province of Frontier narrates its own tale and confirms the moral drawn by Lord Willingdon that if reforms could thus restore normal conditions in a most dangerous province it would not be too much to expect similar results in the rest of India.

While the Viceroy was thus engaged in building the reforms structure, India went through another and more anxious crisis, for the very Liberals who had attended the birth of the Round Table Conference and done the most to accomplish its objective, suddenly began to fumble and fall off. The swift change was due to the announcement of the Secretary of State in the Commons on 27th June 1932 to embody in a single measure provincial autonomy and federal responsibility, but proposing that as in the natural course of things it would require time for the federation to take concrete shape, responsibility in

the provinces would be installed without waiting for "the completion of all steps required for the actual inauguration of federation." The Secretary of State also proposed setting up a Joint Parliamentary Committee which would invite the representatives of Indian opinion to examine the reform proposals before being introduced in Parliament. At one bound the whole edifice seemed to be collapsing. The Liberals were in a rage; they took it as an affront; they decided that the Conference method was being abandoned; they avowed that the healthy practice of joint consultation and deliberation was brought to an end. The Labour Opposition took the same line of view. The Indian press—notably the press that had declared for the boycott of the Conference and had the strongest moral and spiritual affinities with the Civil Disobedience movement—was loud in condemning the announcement. Resignations from the Liberal members of Consultative and other Committees fell in like autumn leaves. Explanations and counter-explanations were of no avail. The situation was gloomy indeed, for Government could not alienate the section of Indian opinion that had stood by them through thick and thin. Lord Willingdon intervened to save the situation. On 5th September he announced that select representatives of British India and the States would again be invited to a conference in London about the middle of November, and the threatening clouds so quickly gathered on the Indian firmament were as quickly dispelled; the clear blue sky was again brought to view.

The Third Round Table Conference was a businesslike body, smaller in composition and free from rhetorical discourses and learned enunciation of political principles that seemed to hinder its predecessors. Its sittings were mostly held in camera but the view of developments behind the purdah was none too rosy. The interests involved were so varying that differences accentuated instead of being worn down by time and the delegates dispersed with the most important questions still unsettled. Neither Britain nor India could afford to waste time any further. Enough opportunities had been given to the parties concerned to formulate agreed proposals, but they left without coming to a final decision. The Liberals came back dissatisfied; the Princes came back, at least some of them, like so many doubting Thomases. That great-minded ruler and statesman, His Highness the late Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes for the year, became more cautious in his statements than he is as a sportsman. His Highness carried vast influence among his brother Princes and as an enlightened and progressive Prince his views were held in respect by the British Indian Liberals while even Congressmen had more than a sneaking regard for him; as such his hesitation meant a lot. On return to India the Liberals came out with manifesto pointing out the deficiencies and shortcomings of the federal image. They called public meetings and organised protests. The Princes were silent; their silence was more ominous than the open opposition of the Liberals. The Viceroy could see the significance of the atmosphere. He could

not allow such a condition to continue. The first move he took was to call all the delegates for lengthy interviews to see how the Liberal and other views could be accommodated in the constitution. The end of the Conference had left the political horizon still clouded. For days the Viceroy had been in personal contact with responsible Indian opinion determined to settle all the outstanding political accounts.

That he succeeded in his efforts is proved by the fact that the Liberal suspicions subsided in course of time, the doubts of Princely India were allayed, and Muslim and Sikh leaders regained confidence in the desire of British authorities to ensure the well-being of their communities under the future constitution. And when the Joint Parliamentary Committee was appointed later all these divergent streams of Indian opinion united in co-operating in its work.

While Lord Willingdon's statesmanship and diplomacy were thus engaged in getting together the various elements for co-operative action in political advance, his administrative acumen was directed towards solution of the deep-seated problems of rural economy, regeneration of handicraft industry, revivification of mechanofacture, crippled under the hammer-blows of organised foreign competition. We shall refer to these and other measures in their more developed form at a later stage. It is sufficient to state here that those measures enabled agriculture and industry to tide over the acute crisis through which they were passing, stabilised Government's finances, made it possible for the provinces to grant

large remissions in land revenue and enact measures for control of usury and organised rural reconstruction.

Relegated to the background of humdrum Harijan activities from behind the prison bars of Yeravda, Mr. Gandhi again made a sudden jump to the forefront of the national stage when, to re-enthuse the flagging energies of Harijan workers and to do penance for certain mistakes in the movement, he announced the decision to enter on a twenty-one days fast from 8th May. In view of the nature and object of the fast and the attitude of mind it disclosed, Government considered it desirable to set Mr. Gandhi at liberty and released him unconditionally on the evening of the first day of the fast. But the pent-up energies of Congress workers outside, lacking fruitful expression for long, proved too strong to permit him to confine himself to Harijan activities alone, and immediately on release he issued a statement affirming his unchangeable faith in Civil Disobedience. That statement practically launched him again, despite his intentions, into the world of political activity.

To reconsider the Congress programme, he advised Mr. M. S. Aney, the Acting President of the Congress, to suspend the Civil Disobedience movement for six weeks and later extended it for a further period to enable consultation with Congress leaders in regard to the continuance or otherwise of the movement. On 12th July 1933 a non-official conference of Congress leaders at Poona, composed of about 150 delegates from all over India, decided,



according to the official statement of the Congress, to suspend mass Civil Disobedience including no-tax and no-rent campaign, but reserved the right of individuals, ready to suffer for their acts, to continue the movement without expectation of help from the Congress organization. It was also understood that if a favourable understanding could be arrived at between Government and the Congress, the movement should be totally abandoned. Mr. Gandhi, accordingly, wired to Lord Willingdon for interview, and replying to it, the Private Secretary to the Viceroy telegraphed on 17th July 1933: "In reply to your telegram asking for an interview, His Excellency has directed me to say that if the circumstances were different he would gladly have seen you, but it would seem you are opposed to withdrawing Civil Disobedience except on conditions and that the interview which you seek with His Excellency would be for the purpose of initiating negotiations with Government regarding these conditions. It would appear to have been decided that unless the Congress reached a settlement with Government as a result of such a decision, Civil Disobedience will be resumed on 1st August. It is hardly necessary to remind you that the position of Government is that Civil Disobedience is wholly unconstitutional and that there can be no compromise with it and that Government cannot enter into any negotiations for its withdrawal. On April 29th, 1932, the Secretary of State stated in the House of Commons that there would be no question of bargaining with the Congress as a condition for its co-operation. The

same position has been consistently maintained by Government in numerous statements. If the Congress desires to resume its position as a constitutional party and to put an end to the movement which has brought grave misery and suffering to the country, the way is open to it as it always has been. It is within the power of the Congress to restore peace by withdrawing on its own initiative the Civil Disobedience movement. As, however, the Congress is not willing to take that action the interview with His Excellency will serve no useful purpose."

Mr. Gandhi sent another wire immediately after, saying: "Your wire of even date has come to me as a painful surprise. I had not expected that Government would take official notice of unauthorised publication of confidential proceedings of an informal conference and, on the basis thereof, reject my request for an interview. If an interview were granted, I could show that the proceedings taken as a whole were calculated to bring about an honourable peace. The Conference undoubtedly was favourable to peace if it could be attained without humiliation. If, however, Government holds that it cannot have any conversations even for promoting peace with the representative of an association engaged in activities in breach of State laws, however repressive they may be, unless that association discontinue such activities which it believes to be in pursuance of an inherent right, I have nothing to state. Nevertheless, I would like to add a personal note. My life is regulated by peaceful motives. I hanker for real peace but I must confess that I cannot be satisfied with a makeshift. If I

resort to non-co-operation or civil disobedience, it is for establishing true and voluntary co-operation and obedience to law in place of forced co-operation and forced obedience. I therefore hope that my request for an interview will be granted."

Replying to Mr. Gandhi's second telegram, the Private Secretary to the Viceroy wired: "His Excellency had hoped that the position of Government was plain. It is that Civil Disobedience is a movement intended to coerce Government by means of unlawful activities and that there can be no question of holding conversation with a representative of an association which has not abandoned that movement." Simultaneously, in the House of Commons Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State, made a statement in the course of which he said: "I repeat there can be no question of making a bargain with the Congress as a condition for their accepting the ordinary obligations of law-abiding citizens.....there is no question whatever of unconditionally refusing an interview. The Viceroy's telegram has the full concurrence of His Majesty's Government." Matters, however, did not end there, for they took another dramatic turn only a few days later.

The tenacity with which Mr. Gandhi fought at the Poona Conference, as the progenitor of the creed of Satyagraha, to keep intact the right of individual Civil Disobedience showed beyond doubt, according to Government, his intention to utilise individual Civil Disobedience as a lever for the development of a mass attack later; and this was claimed to have been established when he proceeded to disband the Sabar-

mati Ashram and enter upon another march, homeless and without shelter, from Ahmedabad to the village of Raas which had faced a fiery ordeal during the first Congress movement. In the statement issued on the eve of the contemplated march, Mr. Gandhi, consistent with his traditionally frank and open methods, laid bare his plans and intentions when he said: "In my opinion it would have been disastrous if in the existing circumstances Civil Disobedience had been altogether withdrawn.....the continuance of civil resistance even by one person ensures its revival by those who have given it up through despair or weakness.....Civil Disobedience is, therefore, to be confined to individuals on their own responsibility although they would be acting on behalf of and in the name of the Congress. Those who so act may expect no financial or other assistance from the Congress. They should be prepared for indefinite incarceration whether ill or well. They may not come out of jail except by termination of their sentence in due course or through the strength of the people. On termination of their sentence, they should seek re-imprisonment on the first opportunity. They should be prepared to brave all the risks attendant upon their action including uttermost penury, and the loss of their possessions, moveable and immovable, or physical torture, such as lathi blows..... Naturally such action can only be expected from a small number specially in the beginning. The very enumeration of the hardship is likely to frighten many people. But experience of patriots and reformers all the world over shows that Nature provides us with the capacity for suffering when it is taken up in a true

spirit. It follows that such response, if it comes at all, must come in the first instance from the intelligentsia. Their example will prove infectious in the long run and pervade the whole nation resulting in a mass awakening that cannot possibly be crushed by any repression be it ever so ferocious.....I am convinced that these men and women will represent the national spirit and the nation's determination to win independence in every sense of the term . . . . It will be the duty of Congressmen and even others who sympathise with the Congress methods and aims, wherever possible, to give relief to the indigent families of civil resisters, specially to the utterly destitute peasantry who joined the no-tax campaign. For they must be ensured that every inch of land confiscated during the campaign, I think lawlessly and wrongly, will be returned to them or their progeny when the nation comes to her own as it must some day."

Government felt it apparent from this announcement that while Mr. Gandhi did not contemplate the immediate resumption of breach of laws, he had definitely started on a period of preparation and propaganda leading to the revival of mass Civil Disobedience. The new campaign was to be inaugurated by the typically oriental gesture of renunciation through a genuine abandonment of the Ashram, and local sympathy and benevolence were to be appealed to by a homeless condition which, as nothing else in India, would have aroused mass sympathy and sentiment. These apprehensions were confirmed on 30th July by Mr. Gandhi's telegram to Government

intimating his intention to march to the village of Raas in Kaira district along with his companions in order to "tender sympathy to villages most hit"; to invite individuals to offer Civil Disobedience in terms of the Congress resolution; and to march "piceless" and depend upon the villagers feeding them. Government could see no difference between individual and mass Civil Disobedience, and agreed with Mr. Gandhi that the example of individuals would "pervade the whole nation," and so the Government of Bombay under section 3 of the Bombay Special Emergency Powers Act of 1932, ordered his arrest on the ground that he "has acted, is acting or is about to act in a manner prejudicial to public safety or peace." Mr. Gandhi was arrested and removed from Ahmedabad to Yeravda, where he was asked later to quit the place, and on his refusal to do so was sentenced to one year's imprisonment. Now starts the most thrilling phase of the drama, for once again he bursts the prison bars open. We shall see how.

After his arrest on 1st August in Ahmedabad, Mr. Gandhi wrote to the Superintendent of the Ahmedabad Central Jail asking for facilities for Harijan work identical with those he had received as a State prisoner in Yeravda; for various reasons Government were not prepared to grant the same facilities and offered a series of alternative conditions, but when on rejecting them he threatened to enter on a fast in Yeravda, they got out of the difficulty by releasing him unconditionally. For a detailed understanding of the issues

involved we give below extracts from some of the letters and telegrams passed between Mr. Gandhi and the authorities. In a letter to the Superintendent of the Ahmedabad Central Prison on 1st August Mr. Gandhi stated among other things : "You might know that before my discharge owing to my fast from the Yeravda Central Prison in May last, I was permitted to do Harijan work and, in that connection, to see freely visitors and equally freely to receive and send letters; to have a typist and to receive newspapers, magazines and other literature. I hope I would be given the same facilities now. I may state that a weekly newspaper called the *Harijan* is issued at Poona and it is necessary for me to send matter for the paper and otherwise to instruct the editor." On August 4 after re-arrest, trial and imprisonment at Poona consequent to refusal to obey the order to quit Yeravda village, Mr. Gandhi repeated the request, intimating that Harijan work could be interrupted only at the peril of his life, and demanded a definite reply by Monday, August 7th. He was informed that the matter was under consideration but that it was impossible for a decision to be reached by the date specified. Subsequently, on August 8 and 10 he addressed further reminders and on August 14 sent the following letter to the Government of Bombay. "It is now the noon of Monday and I am yet without an answer to my request for the resumption of Harijan work on the same terms as before my fast. This request was first conveyed on the 1st instant from the Central Prison, Ahmedabad,

and has since been thrice repeated. The strain of deprivation of this work is becoming unbearable. If, therefore, I cannot have permission by noon next Wednesday, I must deny myself all nourishment from that time, save water and salt. That is the only way I can fulfil my vow and also relieve myself somewhat of the strain mentioned above. I do not want the suspension of nourishment in any way to act as a pressure on the Government. Life ceases to interest me if I may not do Harijan service without let or hindrance. As I have made it clear in my previous correspondence and, as the Government of India has admitted, permission to render that service is implied in the Yeravda Pact to which the British Government is a consenting party in so far as its consent was necessary. Therefore, I do indeed want permission but only if the Government believe that justice demands it and not because I propose to deprive myself of food if it is not granted. That deprivation is intended purely for my consolation."

On August 16 Mr. Gandhi was informed that it was decided that he would be granted the following special facilities for purposes of work strictly confined to anti-untouchability: To receive newspapers and periodicals, but not to be allowed interviews for publication in the press whether with press correspondents or others; to see not more than two visitors a day; to send instructions or contributions to the editor of the *Harijan* three times a week and a limited number of letters of other correspondents; and to have at his disposal a convict typist and books, newspapers, etc., needed for Harijan work.



Mr. Gandhi at first seemed to indicate satisfaction at the offer, but later turned it down and addressed the following to the Bombay Government: "I see that I have hastily told you to restore the goats to me. It shows how disinclined I am to starve, but on reading the notes of orders you have left with me, they are so far short of the original orders of the Government of India and of my requirements that I must not be precipitate in breaking my fast. If Government wish to go back upon these orders, I shall be sorry, but I may not work under the new orders which are a manifest departure from the original and which seem to me to be grudgingly given. I observe you cannot even let me have the letters already in your possession and to hand the manuscript to the acting editor for this week's *Harijan*. It pains me to have to write this letter, but it will give me much greater pain if I break the fast now and have to enter upon a prolonged controversy with Government on many matters that need elucidation. I miss Government's response to the meticulous care with which I am endeavouring to observe the jail discipline and, as a prisoner, tender co-operation which as a citizen outside the prison walls I consider it a religious duty to withhold. I have read your notes three times and such reading has increased my grief to discover that Government cannot appreciate the desperate need there is for me to do Harijan work without let or hindrance. Much, therefore, as I am disinclined to continue the fast, I feel I must go through the agony if I cannot serve the Harijan cause without the tremendous handicap

which, it seems to me, the orders conveyed by you put upon it. Will you, therefore, please withdrew the milk and fruit already received by me and accept my apology for having hurriedly told you that I would break the fast."

The Government of India explaining their position stated that the orders permitted Mr. Gandhi to interview the editor of the *Harijan* as one of his daily visitors and to hand him Mr. Gandhi's manuscript, and that letters, so far as they dealt with Harijan matters, would be delivered to Mr. Gandhi. Government further stated that they were not aware of what Mr. Gandhi "meant by saying that they have admitted that permission to do Harijan work in prison is implied in the Yeravda Pact, though it is true that, in the exceptional circumstances prevailing immediately after that Pact, Government did permit Mr. Gandhi as a state prisoner to inaugurate the movement to which he appeared to be devoting his whole attention. Protests were made at the time, on behalf of the orthodox Hindu community who did not agree with Mr. Gandhi's policy in this matter against his being allowed facilities to conduct a public campaign from jail, and it might well be argued that Mr. Gandhi having now after a period of freedom courted imprisonment again purely on a political issue, should not be allowed any special treatment that is not given to other "A" class prisoners. Nevertheless, Government have been reluctant to take action which could be regarded as an unreasonable interference with the work of social reform or to take their stand too rigidly on the fact that Mr. Gandhi is by his own

deliberate act, a prisoner convicted for breach of the law. In spite of the inconvenience to jail discipline and the anomaly of the position they have allowed Mr. Gandhi facilities for pursuing his work on anti-untouchability which enable him to make important and effective contribution towards it. It was noticeable that when Mr. Gandhi was at liberty he did not appear to devote the major part of his time or attention to this movement; his main energies were employed on politics and on the continuance, in whatever form it might be possible, of the movement of civil disobedience. His present claim that he should be allowed from the prison to carry on his Harijan work "without let or hindrance" amounts to a refusal to accept for himself the normal concomitants of imprisonment except the restriction on his actual physical liberty and, in effect, is a claim to dictate the terms of his imprisonment. Government are satisfied that the facilities they have allowed are ample to enable Mr. Gandhi to conduct such work in favour of the removal of untouchability as is, in the circumstances, reasonable. If Mr. Gandhi now feels, however, that life ceases to interest him if he may not do Harijan service without let or hindrance, Government are prepared, provided Mr. Gandhi is willing to abandon all civil disobedience activities and incitements, to set him at liberty at once, so that he can devote himself wholly and without restriction to the cause of social reform." Mr. Gandhi rejected even this offer and Government ultimately released him unconditionally on Wednesday, 23rd August 1933 after he had fasted for

seven days, most of which were spent in the Sassoon Hospital in Poona. Soon after release Mr. Gandhi went on extensive tours for Harijan work and, in spite of pressure from all sides, kept scrupulously out of politics till the completion of the term of one year he would otherwise have passed in jail.

Lord Willingdon was in Bombay for a prolonged stay in the city to get into social contact with leaders of public opinion, while Gandhian problems summoned the exercise of the Government of India's diplomatic talent. Lady Willingdon returned from England to Bombay on 3rd August and on the 4th Mr. Gandhi was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. Three days later, Sir Frederick Sykes, the then Governor of Bombay, enunciated his scheme for village uplift in the Bombay Legislative Council which, from the fact that similar schemes have been inaugurated at several other provinces and Indian States, can safely be surmised to have been directed from the central authority of the Government of India for establishing concord and progress through the 700,000 villages spread over hills and plains under the natural leaders of rural India. Though there were few formal ceremonies and functions during the stay, the extent to which Lord Willingdon and specially Lady Willingdon were busy during these days can be gauged from the fact that they did not leave out any social institution of importance in the city without a personal visit of inspection, and among the institutions visited were the University Settlement, the Indian Red Cross Office, the Seva Sedan, the Salvation Army, the Bombay Ladies

Branch of the National Indian Women's Association, the Bombay Presidency Women's Council, the Willingdon Boys Home (Salvation Army), the European Pensioners' Widows Home, the Princess Mary Victoria Gymkhana, the J. J. School of Art, the Bombay Club and a host of other institutions. Space does not permit us to go into the details of the visits of Lord and Lady Willingdon to Bombay or for a matter of that any other place, but a single function, not very important in itself, will give an insight into the way they renewed contact with old associations. Lord and Lady Willingdon, as we have observed in previous chapters, participated enthusiastically in the activities of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, and it was but fitting that the delightful building of the Parsi Division of the Brigade at the Esplanade, named after Lady Willingdon, should have been opened at the hands of the Viceroy. Addressing a crowded gathering at the opening ceremony Dr. Nunan recalled "with satisfaction the days when their Excellencies had frequent opportunities to watch personally the work of the Bombay Corps on hospital ships and military corps and in various docks and war hospitals during the whole period of the War", and Lord Willingdon replying said, "I have had ample opportunities of seeing the work of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade in many parts of the British Empire, but I think our association with them was closer in Bombay city during the four years of the War than at any other part of our lives. We learnt to appreciate the voluntary services rendered by you at that time and your presence here

to-day in large numbers show that your enthusiasm has not in any way depreciated and that you are as ready and anxious as before to do your work for the benefit and welfare of the people."

It had long been the complaint of Bombay industrialists that the city interests did not receive due consideration at the hands of Delhi and Simla who, they felt, were dominated by the influence of Calcutta business. In paying a prolonged visit to the city, Lord Willingdon undoubtedly helped towards the redress of the grievance and the *Times of India* of August 15 rightly said: "As we pointed out at the time of their (Lord and Lady Willingdon's) arrival never before in recent times has the head of the Government of India and his wife spent so long a period in Bombay. There has always been a complaint particularly since the introduction of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, that Bombay saw far too little of the Viceroy in comparison with Calcutta, and this fact was undoubtedly responsible for a good deal of the estrangement which grew up between the Western Presidency and the Capital. Bombay felt quite naturally that the Government of India were far more ready to listen to Bengal than to the Western Presidency which was rightly proud of its long established lead, politically and economically. When Lord Willingdon succeeded to the viceroyalty, the hope was expressed that His Excellency and Lady Willingdon who had spent six strenuous but happy years in the Presidency would set up a precedent of close contact. This hope has now been realised and

we trust the precedent will be followed not only by themselves but by their successors in the coming years. Their Excellencies' visit was nominally in the nature of a holiday. But few 'holidays' can have been of a more strenuous character. Lord and Lady Willingdon have been busy every day, Sundays not excepted, literally, from early morning to late at night granting interviews, visiting institutions, attending functions and particularly coming in contact with as large a number of people as possible . . . and we have no doubt that the contacts which Their Excellencies have had with people in many spheres of life during the past fortnight will bear fruit in due season."

Though the Congress still remained indirectly committed to Civil Disobedience, the general feeling even in an overwhelming section of the Congress itself was rapidly turning towards constitutional agitation. That the unofficial Congress Conference at Poona hardly reflected the real Congress feeling was evinced from the fact that soon after the Poona Conference, those journals which had for years supported the national institution declared an open revolt and preached the denunciation of direct action in the political circumstances in which the country was placed. We shall quote three leading journals from three different provinces on the point to illustrate the transformation. *The Tribune* which has a reputation for sound journalism, declared its revolt through a number of articles, in one of which it pointedly stated: "We consider that as between the withdrawal of Civil Disobedience whether by the masses or individually

without any reference to Government's attitude and seeking an interview with the Viceroy in the circumstances in which Mahatmaji sought it, the former would have been both far more honourable and immeasurably more expedient." *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta asked the straight question: "Is it then the intention of the Mahatma to keep his programme of individual Civil Disobedience associated with the Congress. If, so, we must deplore the decision." *The Bombay Chronicle* under the leadership of Mr. B. G. Horniman headed the revolt in the Western Presidency, and in the course of an ably written editorial said: "We do not believe that Congressmen are prepared to kill the Congress for the sake of a platonic justification of the mere principle of Civil Disobedience. Humiliation and failure can be the only result of such a negation of national effort."

The political atmosphere was now definitely clarifying. Mr. Gandhi, free from prison restrictions, devoted himself whole-heartedly to the Harijan movement, and in his extensive and rousing tours through the country helped in no small measure in diverting ebullient national energies into direct constructive channels. On the other hand, leaders of moderate opinion and representatives of Indian States returning from the Joint Parliamentary Committee, were in contrast with their previous feeling, optimistic about the outcome of constitutional reforms. Representative of such opinion was that of Sir V. T. Krishnamachari, the distinguished Dewan of Baroda, who on returning from the Joint Parliamentary Committee said in a



press interview : " I have every confidence that as soon as the new reforms bill is passed, a large number of States will join the Federation and it will be possible to set it up at the earliest possible date after the legislation is passed." Nawab Sir Liaquat Hyat Khan, the Prime Minister of Patiala, the premier State in the Punjab, said : " I am quite confident that Sir Samuel Hoare with his proved sincerity and masterful handling of the greatest political problems in history, backed up as he is by a strong and sympathetic Viceroy, will carry the day in India. The present Secretary of State and Lord Willingdon make an excellent pro-Indian combination and I should be content to leave our case in their sympathetic and skilful hands. They are likely to achieve more for India than are sectional organizations urging conflicting claims and succeeding only in puzzling constitution makers. The Indian States certainly can have no better friends . . . . I venture to think that as long as India's defence organization is not subjected to any quixotic political experiment, the White Paper scheme and even more than that should work successfully, and if rabid communalism does not block the way, will lead before long to full Dominion Status." Similar opinions were expressed by that great financial administrator of the Nizam's territory, Sir Akbar Hydari, and other leaders of Indian States.

The Indian States who seemed indifferent at one stage, hostile at another, lukewarm at the third, had now dropped their indifference and hostility towards the Federal ideal and seemed marching forward in concordant co-operation. No account of

this achievement can be adequate without mention of the services of such leaders of Indian States as of Sir Akbar Hydari, Sir Manubhai Mehta, Sir V. T. Krishnamachari, Nawab Sir Liyqat Hyat Khan and Sir Prabhashanker Pattani. Each of them wields an influence in his State which it is the good fortune of but a select few to enjoy. Apart from the problem of securing the co-operation of Indian States in the inauguration of the Federal Constitution, there are complex problems arising out of the relationship between the States and the Government of India as also in the internal affairs of the States themselves, which demand the earnest application of diplomatic talent and it seems not generally known that among those whose services in this direction were of pre-eminent utility were those of that master statesman of India Sir Prabhashanker Pattani. But while the Indian political front was thus for once consolidated, the die-hards of England began getting more and more reactionary with dangerous effect on Indian opinion, and it will not be before the confidential conversations and correspondence are revealed to the world that the full story of the influence which Lord Willingdon and Sir Samuel Hoare brought to bear on the constitutional reforms, in fighting this reaction, will be revealed to the world. It is enough for us here to remember that not on one occasion did Lord Willingdon allow himself to be diverted from the straight path of progress, not in a single public statement did he give the slightest scope for the most suspicious opinion to feel that he was going back on the declared objective of constitutional advance. The

public are aware that the evidence of Sir Samuel Hoare before the Joint Parliamentary Committee was such as would for ever remain a monument to his stern fight on India's behalf, and it requires but little imagination to state that Lord Willingdon, in touch with Indian opinion and knowing the general feeling here, had accorded full backing to the line taken by the Secretary of State.

Lord Willingdon had now practically succeeded in one part of the dual policy enunciated before, for he had restored tranquil conditions, and had his eye on the fulfilment of the other side of the policy. The restoration of public faith in Lord Willingdon's ability to carry out the constructive side of the dual policy was ably voiced by Sir Shanmukham Chetty, President of the Legislative Assembly, who in proposing the toast of Lord and Lady Willingdon at a dinner he gave on 28th August said: "At this juncture, I feel encouraged by the fact that Lord Willingdon is at the helm of the Indian administration. I am all the more gratified in this circumstance, as His Excellency has given the assurance that it is his intention to stay on and inaugurate the new constitution. I earnestly wish that Lord Willingdon should remain in office not merely to inaugurate the constitution but to see it in full and smooth working order in its earlier stages. My desire to have Lord Willingdon at the head of the administration is based on the fact that in His Excellency tact, personality, goodwill, and other qualities are in abundance, and His Excellency would so manage affairs as to make the use of special powers vested under the new cons-

titution superfluous . . . . Under our present constitution questions affecting the relations of India with foreign powers are strictly barred from the purview of the Indian Legislature. The impending negotiations between India and Japan (we shall refer to them later) will take place in London between His Majesty's Government and the Japanese Government, but in Simla between the Government of India and the representatives of the Japanese Government. If I am not mistaken, this would be the first conference of its kind in the history of British rule in India. Not merely from the point of view of Indian commerce and industry but from the wider point of view of Indian constitutional development, I would recommend this step which has far-reaching implications; I would like to congratulate Your Excellency's Government and my friend Sir Joseph Bhore in particular on this achievement. I hope this Conference would be a mile-stone in the progress of India towards full autonomy. My object in digressing from my main theme was to illustrate my point that in the building-up of a constitution, the personality and genius of the man at the head of the administration would play a greater part than the clauses of a Parliamentary statute."

Coming to the constructive side of the day-to-day administration, we find a host of practical measures taken not only by the Central Government, but, under its leadership, in the Provinces, for the amelioration of peasant condition, through introduction of relief measures; the stringent bills for control of money-lenders' exactions; the scheme for organization

of marketing of agricultural products; the co-ordination of agricultural crops in consonance with world's requirements; the planning of India's intensified foreign trade; and the scheme for obtaining better trading conditions, etc. At the Imperial Economic Conference at Ottawa, India was ably represented by Sir Shanmukham Chetty and Sir Atul Chatterjee, who succeeded in securing for Indian agricultural produce favourable trade terms, and though the Agreement was adversely criticised by an influential section of the Indian press, India's constitutionally-elected representatives in the Assembly gave it a sanction by enacting the bill embodying the Agreement.

An important event in India's international trade relationship was the denunciation of the Indo-Japanese Trade convention in the early part of 1933 due to the depreciation of Japanese currency in relation to the rupee, which drove Indian textile industry among others to the verge of collapse. "The problem with which we were confronted was a difficult one. The depreciation of the currency of Japan relatively to the rupee had given to that country an advantage in Indian markets, which rendered competition impossible," observed Lord Willingdon, and continued, "Our choice lay between inaction, which spelt ruin in many of our industries and the denunciation of the Convention on which had governed the friendly trade relations of India and Japan for so many years. No other practical solution offered itself and notice of denunciation of the Convention was therefore given, and the Convention will expire on October 10 next (1933). By the denunciation of

the Convention and by the passing of the Safeguarding of Industries Act, we have taken power to protect our own interest. We have, nevertheless, been ready at all times to consider any alternative solution that might be put forward. We ourselves were fully conscious of the disadvantage of discontinuity of our treaty relations with Japan, and I am happy to say that as a result of preliminary conversations, a delegation from Japan will shortly arrive in India with a view to the negotiation of a fresh trade agreement . . . . The fact that these negotiations will take place in Simla between the Government of India and the Government of Japan is one of great significance for India." Another noteworthy step in the same direction was the tripartite conference, non-official in nature, between the textile industrialists of India, Lancashire and Japan as a result of which an agreement was arrived at between Indian and Lancashire textile industries, commonly known as the Mody-Lees Pact, which was no doubt at the outset severely criticised by a section by the nationalist press but was whole-heartedly supported by the industry itself. The legislative sanction to the agreement reached between the tea growers of India, Ceylon and the Netherlands East Indies, imposing restriction on tea plantation, and the sanction accorded to the Agreement between participants in the World Economic Conference on silver trade, were further steps in smoothening India's international commercial relations, the latter of which specially, was instrumental in removing the friction and misunderstanding

between India and the United States of America.

Government's financial position which was extremely weak at Lord Willingdon's advent, had by now considerably improved; extensive retrenchments had been carried out in the much-criticised Military Budget; loans raised at higher rates were returned and fresh ones at lower rates successfully floated, resulting in considerable saving in interest charges; the credit of India in the world market was raised to a level few could attain; India's trade and industry began looking up, and though the development of indigenous industry in certain aspects affected the custom's revenue, India's favourable balance enabled Government to remit the exceptionally large sum of 19 crores sterling during a single year as compared with 1½ crores in the previous year covering the same period. "The reduction in imports may signify that India is relying more on her own industrial production", said Lord Willingdon to the Assembly in August 1933, "and this combined with the increase in the favourable balance of payments can be interpreted as signs of strength in the intrinsic position of India. . . . In the meanwhile it may be said that our position remains one which compares favourable with that of any other country. The credit of the Government stands high and the favourable results as regards remittances have a significance at the present juncture, to which I wish to call special attention. These remittances have enabled us to strengthen our sterling balances so that if this position continues, we shall have made the provision of adequate external reserves for setting up a Reserve

Bank an immediate practical possibility." The proposal for the early inauguration of the Reserve Bank, which will take Indian finances clean out of the pale of political influences, and on whose creation depends the acceleration of Federal responsibility, was given a definite shape when, based on the report submitted after an exhaustive discussion in London between the representatives of India and England, the Reserve Bank Bill was framed and placed before the Legislative Assembly. After a thorough and all-sided debate the Assembly put the Bill on the statute book, and it is hoped that the bank will be in working order towards the end of 1935 or the beginning of 1936.

The constitutional discussions had now been taken a step further by appointment of the Joint Parliamentary Committee. The evidence tendered before the Committee by the Secretary of State was responsible for restoring the confidence of level-headed opinion in India on the good faith of British intentions. Further the march of events in India, was steadily carrying the leaders of the civil disobedience movement "in the living forces of constructive politics" and the attention of the pro-Congress press was now directed more towards the process of evolution of provincial autonomy and central responsibility in London than in the possibilities of achieving the separation of India from the community of nations called the British Empire. Lord Willingdon truly forecasted the change in the centre of gravity of Indian politics when he said, "I believe that those whose main political outlook is usually summed up in the word



'Nationalist' will find in the new constitution satisfaction for their claim that the centre of gravity in the Government should be shifted unmistakably from the officials to the representatives of the people and will discover ample scope for new activities and new policies in dealing with the many urgent social and economic problems that confront the country. The struggles, for we can never get away from struggles in politics, will be no longer between those who would break and those who would uphold the law, or between those who would maintain and those who would destroy the British connection, but it will be a struggle between different policies for meeting the practical problems that face us—problems that have perhaps never been in any age so insistent and so complicated as they are now throughout the world. Out of that struggle, will emerge, I hope, solution that will truly advance the welfare of the peoples of this great country." With the declaration by the Congress Working Committee six months later—ratified by the Bombay Congress,—to contest the Assembly elections, Lord Willingdon's forecast was brought within the range of practical accomplishment, and though the Congress is still talking in terms of obstructing the administration and fighting the White Paper proposals there cannot be the slightest doubt, in view of past experience, that before long the pro-Congress forces will be mobilised mainly in directing constitutional opposition to, and later, co-operation with the measures provincial and central Governments will introduce in the various legislatures.

Lord Willingdon's Government had to encounter considerable number of difficulties on India's frontier and outside. In the course of a rebellion which broke out in the spring of 1933 in the Sinkiang Province in China, British Indians settled in that land and their property suffered losses. The presence of His Majesty's representative at Kashgar had greatly minimised the danger and every endeavour was made to bring about the arrest of the perpetrators of these crimes. The disturbances created an amount of uneasiness among the trading classes in India, but Lord Willingdon's Government issued from time to time communiques assuring every help to British subjects in the disturbed Province.

The most notable event during the early part of 1933 was the unsettled condition in the North-West Frontier Province and the aerial bombing to which the Military resorted to restore peace. The aerial operations created some misgiving in India and in England, and to place the position clearly before the reader, we shall here quote Lord Willingdon's reference to the subject in his speech before the Legislative Assembly on 31st August, 1933: "I must now refer to certain events on the North-West Frontier Province, which have recently been creating a considerable amount of interest. I wish from the outset to emphasise that we, as Government, are responsible for maintaining friendly relations with our neighbours and for preserving Law and Order within the confines of India. In view of the recent constitutional changes in the North-West

Frontier Province and the coming changes in India as a whole, it is particularly important that these responsibilities should be faithfully discharged. In the particular case to which I refer, the Government of India received information that certain ill-disposed persons had arrived in Bajaur, who were likely to prove not only disturbers of the peace within our frontier, but also a source of grave embarrassment in view of our experience of the extent of trouble such agitators are capable of causing by the events which occurred in Khost earlier in the year. And it was clearly the bounden duty of my Government to take any and every step to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. In the meantime for motives of their own, and egged on by hostile agitators, the Upper Mohmands made a sudden and unprovoked attack from their semi-independent territory on one of our most loyal tribes, the Halimzai. Whether the action of the Upper Mohmands was in any way connected with the activities of the agitators in Bajaur, it is impossible to say, but realising that this particular portion of the Frontier holds many firebrands, whose main occupation in life is to flout all recognised forms of Law and Order, and knowing the pace, at which infection is likely to spread on the Frontier, I, in consultation with my Government, decided that immediate action was imperative. This action was not forced upon us by any overt rebellion against our own authority, but it was our obvious duty to support our assured clans against unwarranted aggression, and for this reason, a column was despatched into the Halimzai country to support the

Halimzai and to afford them some measure of protection. The column was received with professions of gratitude and has had precisely the effect desired. The loyal elements among our clans have been encouraged and fortified and the hostile Lashkars have now dispersed and disappeared. The problem in Bajaur was not so simple, for, owing to the inaccessibility of the villages in which the agitators had taken up their abode, direct action of the nature mentioned above within a reasonable time was impracticable, in fact, impossible owing to the destruction by flood of the bridge over the Panjkora river. Again after full consideration, we decided, in the first instance, to issue notices to certain individual Khans, who were known to be harbouring the offenders, demanding their surrender. We even went so far as to offer a reward for their surrender and to intimate that no action would be taken against them beyond removing them to a safe distance from the Frontier. On the other hand, we made it clear that failing compliance with our order, Government would take such action as they considered necessary. These notices produced no effect, and it was then, and only then, after considering the alternatives open to us, that air action was instituted against a single small and remote village, called Kotkai, in which it was known that the principal offender was being harboured. In view of the criticism which this decision has evoked during the past few weeks, without perhaps a full knowledge of the facts, I wish to make it quite clear that our action has in no way infringed the canons of interna-

tional law or the dictates of humanity. Air action of this type has been taken on many occasions in the past twelve years without exciting comment or protest. It is not directed against the inhabitants of the villages much less against women and children. It is never undertaken without express authority of the Government of India and without due warning and it seldom results in the destruction of human lives. On the present occasion, no loss of human life occurred. As far as known, only one man was injured. Its effect lies in the economic loss inflicted by the destruction of the dwellings and by the inconvenience and disturbance caused to normal everyday life. I can assure you once more that our sole object is to maintain those conditions of peace and good relations on the Frontier, which are so essential to the ordered progress of the country as a whole."

By the end of 1933, the political situation had clarified almost completely. The troubles on the North-West Frontier had subsided; Indo-Japanese trade relations were friendly again; the mischief-makers in Sinkiang Province in China had been brought to book; the Provincial and Central Government budgets had been considerably strengthened; large export of distress gold from India helped to stabilise rural economy; trade and industry, generally, were looking up. The terrorist movement in Bengal, however, though steadily on the decline, had yet a menacing underground organization capable of extensive harm. The Government of Bengal with the help of Lord Willingdon's Government, as seen before, were armed with every legal weapon to counteract its evil activi-

ties. That merely a negative suppression of the terrorism would not be a true remedy for a movement born of economic conditions, was realised both by Lord Willingdon and the Bengal authorities, and speaking at the annual dinner of the European Association at Calcutta on 8th January 1934, Lord Willingdon not only declared for a firm attitude against terrorism, but called upon the European business community to do everything possible to ease the economic conditions responsible for it. Referring to terrorism, he said: "This is a feature of the situation in Bengal which is fortunately without parallel in India. This movement which endeavours to achieve certain revolutionary aims by the assassination of Government's servants, is one against which the full resources and power of Government will continue unhesitatingly to be employed . . . . But there is another aspect of this terrorist movement, which, I think, it is important to bear in mind. The movement is no doubt, in its purpose, political and revolutionary, and has existed in this Presidency for a number of years. But I think its opportunities for evil have much increased of late owing to economic depression, which has recently overwhelmed the world and from which India could not escape. It is a fact that at present we have too many young men and women passing out of our Universities with B.A. at the end of their names and too few positions for them to look forward to when they want to start on their career of public service. The result is that lack of occupation produces in their minds disgust,

despair and resentment with the result that they fall an easy prey to the leaders of this movement who use them at the most susceptible time of their lives to carry out their nefarious designs."

An important political speech was delivered by Lord Willingdon at the annual Conference of the Associated Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta on 8th January 1934, when in the course of an extensive survey of the political, economic, industrial and commercial conditions in India he enunciated certain general principles and facts, which are worth noting. Referring to the growth of Communism, he put his finger on the right point when he said. "This is an age when the foundations of society are being questioned and we are not free in India from those who wish by invoking violence to overthrow the whole social structure. It would be superfluous for me to argue the case against Communism before an audience such as this; but I would like to draw your attention to this question because I feel there is a danger of underestimating the appeal.....that if a man thinks he has nothing to lose but his chains it is not difficult to persuade him that any change must be for the better." Lord Willingdon then showed the great necessity for providing proper opportunities for a reasonably adequate life to every section of society, which would be an effective means of combating Communism and every other similar creed. He then referred to the two classes to whom such opportunities were not adequate and said: "Now, there are, as it

seems to me, two classes to whom the opportunity of a reasonably adequate life is too often denied. The condition of labour in our industrial centres, although it has improved considerably in recent years, still leaves a great deal to be desired. My Government are endeavouring, as you know, to strengthen the foundation of the industrial structure by carrying out a careful programme of labour legislation and believe this has already had important influence on the relations of labour and society as a whole. But the scope for legislation is very limited, and the most pressing needs of the workers—better housing, greater security, improved health and the development of corporate and civic sense—cannot be provided without local and often individual efforts. The other class which deserves your special attention is the educated middle class. ....I suggest to you as employers, and particularly to those of you who are British, that it is of the utmost importance to provide what opportunities you can for the employment of young Indians.” Lord Willingdon further referred to the Ottawa Pact sanctioned by the Assembly an year earlier, the Indo-Japanese Pact, civil aviation and other questions of national development, and then turning to the problem of planned economic action, so much demanded by Indian commercial and national opinion, said : “It has also been recognised that, if any programme of planned economic advance for India is to be undertaken, it is necessary to have in existence a trained organization for the analysis and interpretation of economic fact and phenomena. A step has



been taken towards the creation of such a work by the constitution at the head-quarters of Government of a branch of the Department of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics.....Besides collecting and analysing material for the use of the Indian delegates in their negotiations with Japan it has carried out the preliminary work in connection with the examination of the effects of the Ottawa Trade Agreement, and it has now under preparation the material for a monthly survey of business conditions in India, no doubt further to improve the statistical material on economic matters." That gives only a glimpse of the extensive field of constructive action which constitutes the other side of Lord Willingdon's administrative policy.

The activities of the Indian Accountancy Board, the progress in the cadet training on the "Dufferin" and the effects of the World Economic Conference were also referred to by Lord Willingdon in the same speech, and then he came to the central point of the Reserve Bank Bill on which depends not only India's future financial stability but also the freedom of its finances from political influences which is so essential a step towards clearing the path to Federal ideal. He said: "I doubt, as many realise, how great a change it (the Reserve Bank Bill) implies in the direction of Self-Government in India. It is a change which we should, perhaps not have contemplated in a time of such instability as the present, if it had not been a prelude to the constitutional changes . . . . The members of the Indian Legislature and the representatives of banking interests have worked hand

in hand with a full sense of the public interests. The co-operation between Indian and British residents in India and the subordination of racial jealousy have been a marked and welcome feature throughout the whole of the discussions." Referring to the improvement in trade brought about by various Government measures Lord Willingdon said: "Our balance of trade is definitely better, that is to say, that imports and exports are coming back to their old relationship, though both are sadly smaller in quantity, owing not only to the fall in prices of our export staples but the decrease in world's demand for them. Our budgetary position still needs great care, but we have always preserved such high standards of financial policy that we have more of a margin than most of the countries. It is wonderful, looking back, that we have been able to stand up to the strain." Winding up, he struck an optimistic note when he said: "It is my confident opinion that a great and brilliant future lies before this country. India is now at the cross-roads. Doubtful and hesitant, she has chosen her path—that of progress. And on it her feet are firmly set."

While internally India was slowly but steadily returning to normal political conditions, in her contact with the outer world there were developments this year which demanded delicate handling from Lord Willingdon's Government. The troubles on the North West Frontier which had embarrassed Government during the previous year and roused adverse comment not only from the nationalist press but even from advanced opinion in America and elsewhere, had no doubt subsided by now, and the hostile

tribes, except for a small, sectional and unimportant dispute, were engaged in normal pursuits; but on the eastern undemarcated frontier between Burma and China incidents occurred threatening disturbance of peace among the semi-administered tribes in that area. The fact that the international frontier there has not been demarcated, coupled with the circumstance of the absence of maps acceptable to both Governments, encouraged certain tribesmen to engage in hostile activities against the Burma military police, and while scrupulously refraining from penetrating beyond the frontier line claimed by the Chinese Government, the police effectively kept the marauders outside the usually accepted boundary, though it was some months before the operations could be brought to an end. Soon after the operations were over, the Government of India through His Majesty's representative in China, it was reported, initiated conversations to establish an agreement with the Chinese Government for acceptance of certain principles to enable demarcation of international frontier and thus to bring to a close a long-standing disagreement.

Lord Willingdon's Government was given an anxious time by a sudden and serious revolt against Chinese authority at Kashgar and the neighbouring territory where life and property of Indian merchants settled in the land were gravely endangered and in some cases suffered severe losses in spite of His Majesty's Consul-General's efforts to secure their protection. The situation reached an acute stage when the Tungan rebels attacked His Majesty's Consulate at Kashgar, which was brilliantly rescued by the

valiant defence of the British and Indian personnel at the cost of a few casualties. As a consequence of this the Chinese Government had to tender an apology to the Government of India and acknowledge the universally-accepted principle that the neutrality of any Consulate must remain inviolate, even when the province administered is studded with factious tribes constantly engaged in trying to secure a dominant position. The disturbances in Chinese Turkistan were at times misunderstood by the public and the press in India, for it was alleged on the one hand that the troubles were fostered by the British, and on the other that the British, taking advantage of the disturbed conditions were penetrating into Central Asia, while a third section, more directly in touch with the Indian vested interests in that province, pressed for a more drastic intervention. Lord Willingdon's Government, taking a balanced view, relied on the Consul-General and avoided international complications which would inevitably have been created by any drastic action.

The unsettled conditions in Chinese Turkistan and border provinces of Soviet Russia were responsible for the influx into India of a large number of refugees including women and children in utter destitution whose re-expulsion to the inhospitable mountains of Central Asia was naturally considered by the Indian authorities repugnant to humanitarian principles. The influx caused no small amount of embarrassment to Lord Willingdon's Government, but considering that secure conditions in India might encourage the influx to a dangerous point, they took immediate steps to

stop further immigration at the Frontier and arranged, where possible, to despatch the refugees already in India to other parts of the world. The death of His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet in December 1933, who had always remained on terms of amity with the Government of India, created another complicated situation because of the international rivalry to secure ascendancy in that land, but the Regent appointed in his place, pending the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, continued the friendly relations and prevented any unfavourable foreign influences.

On the colonial question, the contemplated legislation barring Indians in Zanzibar against entry into certain trades and professions and imposing other disabilities created a furore among the Indian trading class and evoked a stringent and sustained campaign in the Nationalist press. Lord Willingdon's Government "had no previous intimation that such legislation was contemplated, and the time available between its introduction and enactment was inadequate for the effects of the various decrees on Indian interests in Zanzibar to be adequately studied and represented." Early in October 1933 the Government of India deputed an officer to Zanzibar for investigations and Lord Willingdon assured the Legislative Assembly that on receipt of his report, Government would strive their utmost to uphold the legitimate interests of Indians overseas. The other matter on which Indians overseas engaged attention here was the report of the Colonization Inquiry Committee of the Government of the Union of South

Africa, published early in July 1934, which again evoked unfavourable criticism from the Nationalist press. Though no decision has been reached on the subject Lord Willingdon announced that his "Government have been closely studying the reactions of public opinion in this country to the recommendations of the Committee." They also ascertained the views on the report of the Standing Emigration Committee of the two Houses of the Indian Legislatures, hoped shortly to address the Government of South Africa in this matter and pledged that "in formulating their conclusions it will be their endeavour to serve the best interests of the Indian community in South Africa."

International commerce and commercial relations have become to-day extremely complex and some of the best imperial brains, devoting themselves to the task with an energy which can excite nothing but the highest admiration, have not been able so far to find a permanent solution. Far from it being possible for any country, even as extensive as India, to isolate itself from the rest of the world, international commercial relationship to-day has bound each of them with a firmer indissolubility than the proverbial Catholic marriages. Commercial rivalry between advanced nations combined with an acute depression have lead venturesome Governments to discard orthodox canons of international finance and economics, and the foremost among those whose conduct on this matter jeopardised one of India's basic industries as we have seen before was Japan. The rapid depreciation of the Yen dumped this country with

cotton goods which, despite the prevailing tariff duty, could be sold in India at a price for which raw cotton could not be had from the Indian producer, and so Government in full agreement with the unanimous demand of Congress and non-Congress opinion denounced the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Convention of 1905 and passed the Safeguarding of Industries Act in 1933. Though it was considered prejudicial to "the negotiations for a commercial agreement, later started with Japan, to grant under the Act the applications for protection received from a number of small industries," Government met the needs of these industries by the imposition of minimum specific duties on the articles concerned secured through *ad hoc* legislation by the Indian Tariff Amendment Act of 1934 by fixing the level of duties applicable to imports from all foreign countries. While avoiding, as far as possible, an increase in the *ad valorem* incidence of the duties on goods the competition from which did not endanger Indian industries, the Government of India, by this measure, gave due protection to such Indian industries as needed it without outraging foreign opinion.

The report of the Tariff Board Inquiry on Indian Cotton Textile Industry and the consequent measure for protection passed in 1933 rescued the industry from a perilous plight, and for the second time gave statutory effect to the rapprochement between British and Indian industries. Commenting on the talks between the representatives of the Indian and British textile industry Lord Willingdon announced Government's general policy when he said, "My

Government and I attach the highest importance to the creation of close tie between the industrialists in India and the United Kingdom, and consonant with the interests of the country at home we have always been prepared to consider sympathetically any agreement intended to promote the mutual interests of the parties concerned" in accordance with the undertaking given when the Ottawa Trade Agreement was under consideration.

In consequence of the tentative approaches made by the representatives of the various Commonwealth countries at Ottawa, the Irish Free State opened negotiations with India for a permanent trade agreement, and though negotiations on this specific point have not been yet completed, the report of the working of the scheme of mutual preferences prepared at Ottawa is sufficiently convincing to show the direction and extent to which Indian industries, specially agriculture, have benefited by a bill which had at first to face a volley of criticism.

The denunciation of the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Convention of 1905, as mentioned earlier, was followed by fresh negotiations with Japan which opened at Simla on September 23, 1933, and the agreement reached between the Indian and Japanese delegations in January 1934, after lengthy discussions, was embodied in a Convention and a Protocol initialled in Delhi by the two delegations in April 1934 and finally signed in London on behalf of India and Japan on July 12, 1934.

Though the Convention and the Protocol did not come into force till towards the end of 1934, the



provisions of the Protocol relating to the restriction of import of Japanese piece-goods were put into effect from the beginning of 1934, and the duties on Japanese textiles which were raised abnormally due to depreciation of the Yen, were reduced to the level provided in the agreement. Thus ended a serious Indo-Japanese trade friction by an arrangement, sufficiently protective of Indian textile interests and securing a stable market for Indian raw cotton exportable to Japan which is so invaluable to Indian cotton growers, especially at a time of acute agricultural distress seriously affecting this country along with the rest of the world.

One further step in the advance of Indian commercial interests during Lord Willingdon's regime was the detailed preparation to execute the scheme sanctioned in 1930 for appointment of Indian Trade Commissions in six important centres, viz., New York, Hamburg, Milan, Mombasa, Durban, and Alexandria. A High Commissioner's Office was opened in America at the beginning of Lord Willingdon's career, later an Officer was selected for Milan, and though financial stringency has held in abeyance the further progress of the scheme, it is the Government's announced intention to complete its execution at the earliest opportune moment.

More vital perhaps than the great questions of international commercial relationship affecting industrial magnates was the plan to foster the organization of smaller industries, especially the handloom industry, through Central Government contributions for provincial schemes approved, after joint delibe-

ration, by the Government of India. Unlike the development of big industries this programme will help village population out of the economic depression and counteract rural discontent. A Conference for the purpose was called in the middle of 1934, and it is hoped to set-up village, taluka and district organizations for scientific manufacture, distribution, and sale of handloom and other cottage industry products. It remains to be seen if this scheme can be co-ordinated with the Village Industries Association launched at the Bombay Congress, though there is little doubt that Lord Willingdon's Government would give every facility to do so.

As a result of the rapidly growing industrialization and criticism against the Managing Agency system directed both by the public in general and the various Tariff Boards, Lord Willingdon's Government decided to undertake a revision of the Indian Companies Act of 1913. Principally based on the English Companies Act of 1908, which itself has subsequently been revised and replaced by another in 1929, the Indian Companies Act has long been inadequate, and Government have from time to time been receiving proposals from local authorities, commercial bodies and individuals for amending the existing legislation. All those proposals were handed over to the careful scrutiny and examination of Mr. S. C. Sen, specially appointed to draft a comprehensive bill. The rapid development of insurance business of every type and variety during the past few years and the consequent intrusion of bogus company promoters

induced Government to add to Mr. Sen's duties the question of examining provisions for regulating insurance companies in the Company Law and to report as to the lines on which legislation on the point should be reformed.

Coming to the main industry—agriculture—which Lord Willingdon describes as “one of the primary concerns of Government,” it is noteworthy that a Conference of the representatives of Provincial Governments for reviewing the position of agriculturists from the viewpoint of rural credit and agricultural marketing and production was convened in April 1934, and based on its proceedings, Government decided to take steps for the scientific co-ordination of agricultural production, to examine market requirements and to eliminate over and under-production. A crop-planning Conference of provincial Directors of Agriculture, land revenue officers, and non-official representatives from various provinces was convened by the Government of India in June 1934, which after reviewing the position of all the principal Indian crops came to the conclusion that though crop planning was not unscientific or haphazard, it was necessary, in the present economic fluctuations, to set up a comprehensive machinery for consistent and scientific study of the problems of important crop cultivation, and recommended the establishment of appropriate committees. With the acceptance of the recommendations by Lord Willingdon's Government, it will now be possible to secure a periodical stock-taking of the position of the principal crops in relation to world market pros-

pects, and such a machinery, in the swiftly changing conditions to-day will enable raising of crops best in demand and thus secure the fairest prices.

The marketing of agricultural products to best advantage, which constitutes another problem, perhaps of even greater importance, was also tackled by the Provincial Economic Conference, and the proposals outlining an intensive programme for developing of marketing facilities, which, it is held, will bring immediate prospects of substantial results, was accepted by Lord Willingdon's Government with the result that a Marketing Expert was appointed on the staff of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research having the allotted task to chalk out a detailed programme of marketing organization. Lord Willingdon, explaining its extreme utility said: "Experience gained elsewhere shows that the range of marketing activities must be wide. It must, for example, include the organization of an efficient, intelligence service in external markets regarding Indian product and the requirements of consumers, both abroad and in this country. An efficient marketing organization must also ensure the grading, sorting, and bulking of the main staple products and the establishment and development of regulated markets in India. The first task is the undertaking of market survey for the purpose of ascertaining the data on which future state developments can be planned. The initial step, therefore, will be to obtain and set out in detail the present system of marketing of the more important commodity, such as wheat and rice, oilseeds, plantations, and special crops, such as

tobacco and fruit, as also dairy products in which I include livestock. This survey will be carried out not only in the provinces separately, but will also deal with the inter-provinces, inter-state and foreign trade so as to perfect an all-India picture of the existing conditions as a common basis for future progress. The report on each survey will set out in precise technical detail, definite suggestions regarding marketing organisation with a view to improving the existing conditions in the interest of producers. The work connected with the execution of these surveys will be shared between the Central and Provincial marketing staff, but it is the intention of my Government that at least in the initial stages the cost should be met by Central revenue so that the urgent task of ascertaining the data and formulating a co-ordinated plan of marketing organization should not be delayed by reason of the inability of one or more provinces to meet the cost of such investigation. The question as to how the cost of the various organizations and activities resulting from these surveys should be met will be one for future consideration on the basis of the benefits expected from the plans that may be adopted."

Turning to the development of means of communication, so essential to national prosperity, we find that during 1933-34 the work of road development was carried further and systematised, the position of railways was further improved financially, and earnings from the state railways were better by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  crores than in 1933-34 compared with the same period of the previous year; the project for a direct railway

line from Bombay to Karachi was taken a step ahead and as Lord Willingdon said, "the increased prosperity of our railways is at least an indication of a general revival of trade and commerce throughout the country." The Vizagapatam Harbour, opened towards the end of 1933, gave improved facilities for seaborne trade on the eastern coast and showed a remarkable increase in the quantity of cargo handled. "The development of the Harbour has been proceeding steadily," said Lord Willingdon to the Assembly in August 1933, "and with the improved facilities which it is the constant aim of the administration to provide, it will, it is hoped, be possible in the not very distant future to open to vessels of much larger dimensions than can be accommodated at present. There has already been a substantial increase in the quantity of cargo handled at the port, and as improved facilities become available, it will, it is confidently hoped, attract an ever-growing volume of traffic in the future. Vizagapatam Harbour supplies a long-felt need for a safe anchorage for ocean traffic on the east coast of India between Calcutta and Madras and should assist greatly in the development of a hinterland, rich in natural resources, by providing for its products a convenient entrepôt for the markets of the world."

Aviation as the swiftest and most up-to-date means of communication received the insistent attention of Lord Willingdon's Government, and with the extensive programme of ground organization it is hoped to bring Indian civil aviation near to the level of some of the most advanced countries of

the world. The equipment of the Karachi-Rangoon and Karachi-Madras routes is expected to be brought to the requirements of modern standard, and preparations are set on foot to organize the Calcutta-Bombay and Karachi-Lahore routes on similar lines. The Indian Aircraft Act of 1934 will co-ordinate aviation development of the country and is sure to encourage its rapid expansion. Nothing more need be said here. India and Indian States are fast getting air-minded as was testified—to mention but two incidents—by the enthusiasm roused at Karachi, Allahabad and other places by the London-Melbourne air race; and the rousing reception given to the Tata scholars of the Bombay Flying Club on their return from England.

Broadcasting is looked upon as much more than a means of entertainment, for as an instrument for forming public opinion, it is considered far more effective than any other means, specially in a country like India with a vast illiterate village population, and Lord Willingdon's Government sanctioned the erection of a large transmitting station at Delhi with Urdu and English broadcasting arrangements, which, it is hoped in course of time, will be the centre of a complete system of broadcasting for the whole country, facilitating the execution of broadcasting in rural areas which Provincial Governments and Indian States have included in their schemes of rural reconstruction.

No review of Lord Willingdon's administration for this year can be complete without reference to the working population in the country and the

measures enacted for its amelioration. With the return of a number of accused in the Meerut conspiracy case to their centres of activity, labour unrest began steadily increasing, and industries, like the cotton textile industry in Bombay, already struggling against depression and severe competition, were handed over to the effects of frequent militant strikes. As in the political field, so in the world of labour, Lord Willingdon, seeking harmony above everything else, resorted to the dual policy of constructive progress on the one hand and counteracting violence on the other. Measures like the Trade Disputes Conciliation Act passed in Bombay and other provinces as also the proscription of the Communist Party of India throughout British India followed by its proscription in some of the leading Indian States, constitute one side of the dual policy, and the implementing of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour through, among other things, the Workers' Compensation Act, the enactment of the new Factories Bill providing for the reduction in the hours of work from 60 to 54 in perennial factories, etc. and the Dock Labourers Bill, designed to secure greater safety for workers in this vital social service, constitute the other side of the dual policy. The Indian Dock Labourers Bill, effectuating the International Convention concerning workers employed in loading and unloading ships, empowers Government to make regulations for the safety of dock workers in accordance with internationally-accepted standards, and provides an earnest of Government's desire to conform to the best stan-



dards in the treatment of labour. The policy has proved so far successful that the labour movement is at the lowest ebb to-day, strikes are rarer than at any time during the last eight years and the Congress, which at one time flirted with the leftist labour tactics openly repudiated them at its Bombay session when the president ruled out the resolution condemning the police ban against labour demonstration at the Congress pandal.

On the political front, the terrorist activities in Bengal were, through stringent measures, further brought under control, and public opinion hesitant or indifferent so far was mobilised against the votaries of violence. "The attack on Sir John Anderson", observed Lord Willingdon, "providentially wholly unsuccessful, undoubtedly had the effect of rousing public opinion against terrorism, as perhaps nothing else could have done and called forth from all sides condemnation of the cult of assassination. In fact the most satisfactory feature of the last few months has been that there are distinct signs that a definite stand against terrorism would be welcomed in many quarters where in the past, it might have been regarded as anti-national". The Provincial Councils of Bengal and Assam passed by large majorities legislation which the local Governments considered necessary for dealing with terrorism and the Legislative Assembly supplemented the local acts and co-ordinated them by a measure of its own. Thus Lord Willingdon and the Provincial Governments obtained the sanction of peoples' constitutional representatives for all the measures they took to counteract terrorist

activities ; that the measures did, in effect, represent public opinion was further proved by the appeal issued by leaders of all shades of opinion in Bengal and the resolutions the Anti-terrorist Conference passed to take steps to prevent youthful idealism being dragged down into wrong channels.

Congress opinion, as stated before, was steadily veering round to constitutionalism. In April 1934 Mr. Gandhi finally suspended civil resistance for Swaraj as distinct from its use for specific grievances, and the Working Committee later voted for contesting the Assembly elections. The plenary session of the Congress in Bombay under the presidentship of Babu Rajendra Prasad endorsed the Working Committee's resolutions, launched the Congress, at least for the present, on the path of constitutionalism, and there is little doubt that a considerable portion of those Congress leaders elected to the Assembly will inevitably find themselves involved in the constructive endeavours of constitutional progress. These facts coupled with the restoration of peaceful condition in rural India practically means the fruition of the one side of the dual policy.

It is necessary at this stage to go behind the dry facts of the Congress movement enumerated in this chapter and to endeavour to interpret the significance of the actions inspired by one of the greatest and most dynamic personalities in the world to-day : The political policy of Mr. Gandhi may be questioned and criticised, his economic theories may be exposed to ridicule, his plan of direct action may be said to cause havoc in the country. It is all a matter of

opinion, temperament and outlook on life. But on the question of his contribution to the moral regeneration of the country there can be no two opinions. And moral regeneration is an essential foundation of the political edifice under construction to-day.

It is true that the history of a nation is not, as imagined by many in the past, merely a record of the achievements of great men. Great men themselves are the product of social forces born on the battlefields of ideological controversy and socio-economic clash of interests, reacted upon and guided, by the calm and soothing words of the wise before them. The scandalous chroniclers of fratricidal wars who depict Indian history as reeking with the blood of rapacious slaughter, mistake the selfish and perilous ambitions of a few for the moral and intellectual pilgrimage of the millions of masses proceeding through the ages to evolutionary perfection. Indian opinion—to use the word in its widest sense—to-day is the resultant of the teachings of a hundred different saints, philosophers and prophets, woven into the life-texture of Indian society—teachings which will continue to discharge their commanding responsibilities for centuries to come. Right from the stentorian proclamations of the Vedas in the early dawn of history down to modern teachers like Swami Vivekananda and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, India has been directed pre-eminently to a spiritual and philosophical outlook on life. India, though not indifferent to, has not made the ledger-book of custom-house the sole measure of its advancement, and its greatest politicians have been great, because they were saints and philosophers, intent on

practical application of their pronouncements.

It may amaze the rest of the world, not India, that the greatest apostle of Indian liberty to-day is one whose spiritual descent is through Gautama Buddha, Mo Ti, Jesus of Nazareth and St. Francis of Assisi, that the genealogy of his teachings is traced to Tolstoy and the Sermon on the Mount and not to the trumpet calls of Rousseau, Voltaire and Lenin. They were of the echoes of the Galilean hillsides that gave his voice the resonance of legions when this wisp of a man, gaunt, emaciated, unclad but for a breech cloth, flung defiance against the world's mightiest Empire on the lonely Gujerat beach off the Arabian Sea and drew the heaviest libations from his countrymen for the altar of Liberty.

Eschewing all the appurtenances of greatness, rejecting all wealth and material power, Mr. Gandhi has subjected himself to an extraordinarily rigorous discipline, and exercised a weak, shy, retiring, vacillating mind into an iron and unbending will that has a dynamic faith in its own decisions which are held out against a world of ridicule, mockery and contempt, not because of intellectual superiority, but because he considers them to be the demands of the Inner Voice. It is a combination of these facts that send thousands of his countrymen clinging to his feet as he journeys incessantly through the simmering heat of this country and compels tens of thousands to hand themselves over to the prison-guards of the British Indian Empire because he desires it. His policy may appear wrong, his programme seem to be born of impatience, but there is no getting away

from the fact that he has brought about a moral regeneration of his people without which there can be no reality of the political Swaraj the British intend constructing.

It is his moral energy, backed with the impregnable authority of personal example, that is launching a sustained assault on the theological narrowness and iron formalism of religion, and unloosens the stranglehold on Indian social life of superstition in its basest and crudest form. He has started a crucial struggle in the region of ideas, a struggle between tradition and evolution, between the altar and leaven, that will revolutionize Indian life. His sturdy self-reliance is beating to smithereens a fatal tendency of parasitical dependence that had held India in the grip. Using his gigantic personality to incorporate his ethical ideals in national life, he has been the greatest exemplar against those who sought by conspiracy and violence to reach the pinnacle of national liberty. "He would have India respected by the materialistic world but not at the sacrifice of her peculiar genius. He would have India well-fed and housed, but not at the expense of coming to live more for the flesh than for the spirit. As such he is a seer among statesmen".

The incredible conflagration he set ablaze, is intended to burn within it the threatened intrusion of chicanery in political India, and to reduce to ashes the most odious forms of social necromancy eating into the vitals of national life. A new religious impulse to-day replaces the baser influences of the past by the higher inspiration for the future, and the

newly felt hunger and thirst for moral cleanliness is meant to be the foundation for the political superstructure. British administration contemplates erecting. The moral genius of Mr. Gandhi is laying the essential foundations for the political and administrative architecture of Willingdon's Viceroyalty.

Gandhian career is one long series of experiments with great things and small—experiments in dietetics and treatment of diseases, in ethics and philosophy, in politics and economics—and it would not at all be surprising if this great believer in “trial and error” method and sympathetic student of modern world, throws overboard, as a result of his ripest experiments, all the past ideas of Western civilization and science, and we find in Gandhism a perfect synthesis of all that is best in the East and the West harnessed for the common weal of India and the world.

Every political action and policy of Lord Willingdon had to take cognizance of Mr. Gandhi's reactions thereon. Mr. Gandhi knows that his personality is his greatest asset and uses it to the full. When he entered upon self-immolation to secure alteration in the Premier's Communal Award, he staged a cosmic drama with himself as the centre of tragedy, putting spiritual power against politics and exposed the Empire to the peril of world condemnation. No argument, however sharp, over the constitutional merit of the dispute that occasioned the sacrifice would, in the event of a tragedy, have helped British statesmanship. It was not a battle of arguments, but a play of emotions aroused by a personality venerated throughout the

world, subjecting itself to a crucifixion lengthened into weeks, with all the limelight of the Press concentrated on the Cavalry. That was the crescendo of Mr. Gandhi's exploitation of his own personality. In releasing him on the eve of his fast Lord Willingdon not only averted an imperial catastrophe but harnessed the great personality for a rightful purpose. The acceptance of co-operation from this erstwhile opponent of the ruling class for Behar earthquake relief testifies to the close relationship that, in fact, exists between the intentions and purpose of the two apparently hostile forces.

"Gandhi is to-day a problem," says Dr. Josiah Oldfield, "To Rulers and Governors he is a thorn in their side. To logicians he is a fool. To economists he is a hopeless ignoramus. To materialists he is a dreamer. To communists he is a drag on the wheel. To constitutionalists he represents rank revolution." To those who miss the underlying objective of his programme and action and the significance of the rigorous moral drill he demands of his followers, Mr. Gandhi will ever remain a problem. With the realisation, however, of the ends and objects of his ceaseless toil, his every action gets crystal clear and reveals itself as a component part of an organic whole. The attainment of political independence is only a minor port in the journey of his idealism, and he magnifies it only to make it an effective rallying centre for the spiritual regeneration of his country. What to a work-a-day politician would be a surrender, as the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement was, is to him an honourable settlement, not because it brought independence an inch

nearer, but because it exercised the moral backbone of the nation. He is a prophet using political platform to proclaim the preachings of Galilean hillsides in the slumlands and dreary villages of India. When the history of the present times comes to be written, it would be realised that while Lord Willingdon toiled incessantly in the political and economic field to nurse the delicate plant of democratic freedom in India, the challenging services of his inveterate opponent, in the ethical realm were directed by a kindred purpose with a kindred zeal. This has to be realised for a true understanding of the dry facts of the Congress-Government struggle given in the present chapter.

To return to the main theme again. Lord Willingdon, who had gone to England in June 1934 to acquaint the British authorities with the Indian political situation, on return in August made a public announcement regarding general developments in the constitutional reforms, before the two Houses of the Legislatures in the course of which he said:

“You may expect me to give you some account of the impressions I have brought back here as a result of my two months’ visit to England and of the general atmosphere towards the reforms scheme, which has been under consideration for some years and is now reaching its final stages. It will, I am sure, be obvious to you all, knowing parliamentary procedure as you do, that it would not be possible for me to forecast information as to what recommendations the report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament is likely to contain. Nor again can I set your minds at rest as to the date of publication of the Report, for



no final decision was reached when I left. As you know, the Committee has dispersed for the summer recess, but will reassemble early in October in order to carry its work to completion before Parliament is prorogued. During my short stay at home, I had many opportunities of meeting and having discussions with all sorts and conditions of people, with members of both Houses of Parliament, with those interested in trade and commerce and business in India, and with many others both men and women who, for one reason or another, were keenly interested in Indian affairs. The general impression I have brought back with me is that my countrymen in England are full of goodwill and sympathy for the natural aspirations of Indians in regard to political advance. A deep sense of responsibility was, moreover, evident on all sides in the general anxiety to obtain first hand information from those of us, who have had the most recent experience of the affairs and conditions in this country. I should like to add that I come back with feelings of the keenest appreciation which, I am sure, will be shared by every member of both our legislative chambers and by the public outside, of the untiring labours which the members of the Joint Select Committee have freely and readily given during the past 15 months to secure a proper solution of the great problems of Indian reform. One assurance I can confidently give you. When the new constitution bill is passed into law, you may rely on my efforts to ensure that no time will be lost in carrying into effect as expeditiously as possible the intentions of Parliament as expressed in the act. I have spoken on the res-

possibility of my countrymen at this present juncture, but we who live and work here and who have position and influence in the public life of this country have a great responsibility too. During the coming months it will be our duty to guide public opinion in the highest interests of all classes of our people. Let us put aside all racial feelings, if such exist. Let us believe in each other's sincerity of purpose to continue working towards the fulfilment of our cherished hopes for the welfare and advancement of this country. I would ask you to look around the world at the present time and amidst all the troubles, anxieties and possible dangers that we see in many countries and in diverse lands, we can proudly feel that within the territories of the British Empire conditions are both sound and stable, and that we are slowly and steadily recovering from the world depression, which has so seriously affected us all. For the greater part of my public life I have served the British Empire in its outward parts and by far the greatest number of years of that life have been spent in this country, which I have always looked upon as my second Empire home. During that life I have become more and more convinced that it is by the influence and example of the friendship and close co-operation within our Empire that we shall more and more exercise an influence in securing peace and goodwill in what is now a very distracted and unsettled world. With this in my mind, let my last word to members at the close of this parliament be heartfelt prayer that as our two races by fate or destiny were brought together long years ago to work for the development and prosperity

of India, so in the future, and particularly in the critical days that lie before us still to secure the fulfilment of those political hopes and aspirations which many of us have striven for many years."

Clouds, dark and menacing, seemed lowering on the Indian political skies when Lord Willingdon assumed the Viceroyalty. Economically India was in a terrible plight; agriculture was in the stranglehold of depression; peasantry unable to meet its revenue and money-lenders' charges; trade was coming to a standstill; industry languished under fierce competition from foreign nationalities; Government's finances were weak and unstable; the Congress was at war; the working classes seething with unrest. To-day everything has changed. The Congress is assuming the honourable position of constitutional opposition, and if it talks of fighting the White Paper, it is by constitutional means. The Liberals have now settled down with faith in future hopes; the Princes look eager to offer their co-operation. Indian opinion, as voiced not only by vested interests but by the most radical elements, is definitely organized to-day for fighting against the menace of terrorism in Bengal as was shown by the Calcutta Conference so enthusiastically supported by every section of the Nationalist press. On the other hand, the preliminary spadework for heralding the arrival of reforms has been going ahead full speed. Various committees have been busy filling the details to make the canvass of reforms complete.

Though the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee is given a mixed reception to-day and the pro-Congress and radical commercial opinion is

talking of boycotting and obstructing the new constitution, there can be no getting away from the fact that the wide extension in franchise and the considerable enlargement of provincial and central legislatures under the new constitution would inevitably shift the centre of gravity of the radical Congress political leadership with a stake in the country to the legislatures, and at least an important section of those who led the law-breaking movement in the past will, when harnessed to the wheel of constitutional machinery, find themselves among the foremost upholders of law. That will belie the nervous fears of reactionary Diehards and justify the Liberal optimism inspiring the viceroyalty of Lord Willingdon. The Congress has secured considerable amount of success in the Assembly elections, but whatever the shortsighted politician may feel for the present, events will prove that with the natural absence of any other political programme after the Bombay session, the Congress and its followers will now pursue constitutional activities in the Legislature to the practical exclusion of everything else, and the question of Constituent Assembly, even if taken up seriously, will not affect the realities of practical politics. The Bombay session of the Indian National Congress has completely vindicated the policy of Lord Willingdon. The newly inaugurated Village Industries Association will be the unofficial counterpart of Lord Willingdon's schemes, and the altered Congress constitution will effectively keep under control the revolutionary firebrands ; the abandonment of Civil Disobedience and the direction of political activity through parliamentary channels was

all that Lord Willingdon ever wanted. The Bombay Congress has done it ; and a formal understanding between the Congress and Government is now within the realm of practical propositions.

Planned action is now the slogan in advanced European countries. It has been the demand of Nationalist India and is now the watchword in every department of Government's national life. Planned action for industrial development and for commercial activity ; planned action for raising crops, for industrial manufacture, for developing agricultural productivity, for counteracting the menace of usury ; planned action for reviving cottage industry ; planned action for road development, civil aviation, irrigation, railways and other means of transport ; planned action for the well-being of the proletariat and petty peasant—these are some of the directions in which Lord Willingdon's Government have been working during the last few years, and though the fruits of such planned action cannot fully be realised immediately, their effects are being steadily felt and will be enjoyed by India for years to come. Lord Willingdon has undoubtedly strengthened the foundation of planned action in every field of national life, and it will be for India's leaders to advance along the path he has marked out by his Government to reap the full benefit thereof.

## THE FUTURE

**I**N more than one sense India is the brightest jewel in the British Crown. The interests of India and Great Britain are more completely intertwined than those of any British colony and the mother-country. It was observed by an eminent British publicist with some exaggeration that of every pound of the income of the Britisher five shillings come out of England's transactions with India, and when such vast interests are combined with the gigantic problems of political and economic origin amidst a population of divergent races and historical traditions, the magnitude of the ruler's task is appreciated only to some small extent.

Indian atmosphere has revolutionised since the days of the Honourable East India Company; it is radically different from the Victorian and Edwardian periods. There was a time during the days of the East India Company when considerations of party interests dominated high administrative appointments. An interesting instance of such an appointment was seen exactly a hundred years ago. The term of the

memorable Governor-Generalship of Lord William Bentinck had come to an end. The Chairman of the Court of Directors was balancing between the virtues of Lord Elphinstone, recently returned from Bombay, and Sir Charles Metcalfe still ruling over Bengal. Lord Elphinstone turned down the offer and Sir Charles was duly recommended. The Parliamentary Board of Control would not accept the non-party the nominee of the Company. The Liberals, in power then, were thrown out of office before putting their man in the saddle. The Conservatives rode into office and chose Lord Heytesbury, a full-blooded Tory. There were the usual congratulatory meetings and banquets. At the farewell banquet, attended amongst others by the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, the post-prandial oratory surpassed all previous record. But things were destined otherwise. Just as Lord Heytesbury was about to start for India the Conservative Government came down with a crash and the Governor-General-designate had to cancel his passport. The Liberals rejected the appointment and got in their own man, Lord Auckland. Other instances, perhaps not so glaring, but consistent with the above can be cited. It was not only party considerations that then dominated the issue. Within the framework of party considerations there were factors of intimate domestic reference. Sons and sons-in-law of rich peers, bankers, businessmen, military and naval officers had to be accommodated in some high colonial office or other, the never-do-wells of high London society had to be supplied with profitable posts; inconvenient party men, capable and

ambitious, who could not be accommodated in Cabinet composition had to be got out of the way into the colonies.

Those days are gone now, never to return. It is significant of this change that though twice in office not one from the British Labour Party had been sent to any of the chief colonial administrative posts. The change is due to the entire political situation throughout the world from the beginning of the century and the greater complexity of colonial administration due to it. In the previous century the search for these abilities was often confined to the limits of the ranks of the party in power. The names of Governor-Generals like Lord William Bentinck, Lord Ellenborough, Lord Canning, Lord Hardinge and Lord Ripon, to mention but a few of the galaxy of Viceroys and Governor-Generals who were pre-eminently qualified to fill the rôle of administrators of the great dependency,—and all these played their part before the present change—are still remembered in India for their wise and benevolent rule, generous policies and steady purpose.

To-day the Viceroyalty of India is no more a party prize; it has not been so at least for the last thirty years. Each of the Viceroys during the last thirty years has had a strenuous time before him. Some of them were worried about foreign relations, others by domestic anxiety, but each laid an impress on the face of India that nothing can erase. There was Lord Curzon who lived and ruled like a great and benevolent Moghul, loved power and exercised it as few before him and none after him have exercised; he appreciated oriental pomp and colour,



knew their political value, believed in autocracy and efficiency, and none was more fitted to practise them. There was Lord Hardinge who commanded respectful admiration and gratitude of his subjects as few Viceroys are likely to enjoy. His advocacy of Indian cause, whether in India or outside, was fired with a zeal no Indian could have surpassed and he carried India into the War with a loyalty which shocked the enemy and surpassed England's highest expectations. When the Mesopotamian report was published, who stood more steadfastly by Lord Hardinge, who assured him of their unwavering confidence than the great people of India? Then we had Lord Chelmsford "a perfect gentleman", a picture of politeness and courtesy who ruled India's war destiny and its aftermath, slipped at a critical juncture, attempted by every means to retrieve but left the country while the loud cries of nationalist India demanding his recall had hardly died down. Lord Reading who faced the whirlwind and left the country in restored confidence, was, if ever was one, a great ruler. He came as a renowned Liberal, a distinguished ex-Lord Chief Justice, a diplomat of the highest reputation; none of these could secure Congress co-operation. His public declarations looked like the utterances of a revolutionary; they were all of no avail. There was no scope but for a fight to a finish. He launched the offensive at the most appropriate moment and came out crashing before the country knew what had happened. The stewardship of Lord Reading had left the forces of constitutionalism fully mobilised.

On the tranquil seas of Indian politics came Lord

Irwin. The weather was rapidly changing ; there were revolts in agrarian populations, the educated youth rapidly passed through a process of radicalisation, the industrial areas were being disturbed as never before. One strike wave after another hit the country; the Congress declared for independence ; the Liberals decided on boycott of the Parliamentary Commission ; to the announced invitation for a Round Table Conference, the Congress replied by a hurricane campaign of civil disobedience and sent fifty thousand persons to jail. There was no end of trouble among the ryots in Bengal, the Central Provinces, the United Provinces, Gujerat ; the Frontiers, and Burma were violently disturbed over a long period before a pact was arrived at between the Congress and the Government. Underneath the pact, the seething forces of restlessness, held in leash by a moral binding, were more cataclysmic in their potency, the economic crisis was deeper, the political atmosphere more dangerous. The inevitability of a second struggle was considered obvious even before the retirement of Lord Irwin.

Lord Willingdon had to deal with a changed India. The India that prayed for a few more posts in the higher services is not the India that demands the fullest control over the administration ; the India that requested a slight modification in the existing laws is not the India that struggles for full power to make and unmake any laws it likes ; the India that passed humble and respectful resolutions for the separation of the judiciary from the executive is not the India that declares a moral struggle

for entire control over both the judiciary and the executive; the India that sent submissive memoranda for a few more Army commissions is somewhat different from the India demanding full control over the Military department itself; the India which criticised the details of financial policy is not the India that wages war for the most unbridled command over the finances of the country; the India that mildly suggested modifications in foreign policy is not the India that insists on full charge over entire foreign policy; the India that wanted the rulers occasionally to consult Indian advisers and to take them into confidence is not the India that talks in terms of Dominion Status, Self-Government, Swaraj, full Independence.

India has gone through two political upheavals within the course of three years. These upheavals leave behind a host of problems crying for solution. Counteracting political impatience is an important but negative achievement; law and order are necessary only for the moral and material advancement of the country, the development of its natural resources, the building up of a prosperous countryside and an enlightened and happy industrial life; constitutional reform again, though extremely vital, is only a means, with national regeneration as its objective.

Lord Willingdon has often expressed the hope to be the first constitutional Governor-General of India, but even as such he would wield powers for better or worse, which few are destined to wield in their lifetime. Over half his Viceregal period has passed and important as the first half of the

Viceregal regime undoubtedly was, history will finally judge his leadership by the total of his solution of major questions of national prosperity and the manner of his cementing the bonds between India and the Commonwealth of Indo-British nations. History will judge his rulership from the help, advice and incentive he gives in the introduction of wise and healthy laws courageously enacted and wisely administered, by the social improvement he initiates, by his fight against illiteracy, insanitation, sickness, disease, squalor and superstition, by his championship of the status of women and the cause of the destitute child; above all, by the lead he gives in problems international as affecting this country, the solution of unemployment, trade depression, the dead weight of war liabilities, the future of disarmament and the question of Indians overseas. The present work reviewing his administration of two of the great provinces of India and his Viceroyalty, published at this juncture, would be incomplete if it were not to discuss the main problems likely to command administrative attention in future and give a forecast of how in the light of past Government policy, he and his successors, continuing the line of action, are likely to approach them in the years to come.

“Nowhere in the British Commonwealth, hardly indeed anywhere in the civilised world” says Sir Frederick Whyte in “The Future of the East and West”, “is the statesmanship of any of the politically mature Western nations faced with so severe a test of its merits as in India.” This is truer than one would like to believe. It is no more correct, as could be said

some years ago, that the nationalist aspirations are confined to the thin stratum of educated town-dwellers. "We deceive ourselves unless we recognise that Indian nationalism is strong and will grow stronger", said Lord Irwin in the course of a lecture at Toronto University and continued: "Whatever, therefore, the difficulties in the path of the development of democratic government in India—and they are as formidable as they well can be—there is no escape from them." In the course of the same lecture he said: "Nor is it only on the political side that India is tormented by fears and conflicts and uncertainties. The economic problem is ever present tempting or driving the Indian youth in growing numbers to insure themselves, as they suppose, by education against the low standard of life that otherwise appears for most to be the only certain future. Too often—for Indian education has far outstripped her technical development—great sacrifices are made as a result; and bitter disillusionment becomes the recruiting sergeant for the revolutionary ranks."

The nationalist sentiment is not only increasing in width and intensity but is rapidly changing its complexion. The peasantry is growing more militant, the working classes more radical, the youth more impatient, the communalist more fanatical, the Congress is turning pink, the moderates more extreme. A stage is being reached when for practical purposes the differences between the Moderates and Congressmen will be obliterated. "To-day in India there is going on a steady transformation of moderate opinion, which is becoming more extreme,

and it is idle to think that the moderates alone will be able to provide the foundation for the extensive political reforms which it is hoped to rear as the result of the Round Table Conference." This is the verdict of no less a student of Indian situation than Mr. J. Coatman. It is equally idle to imagine that the reforms, however, generously conceived, will bring to an end political upheavals, and the chances are that the very inauguration of the reforms will be the jumping-off ground for militant action. The actual fact of the reforms will be an incentive to further advance. This is no new development, for the basis of modern administration makes stagnation impossible. All the modern forces are for progress. The State has, therefore, either to be progressive and thus to ensure its safety, or be reactionary and bring itself to a violent end. The Government of India review, "India—1930-31", puts the matter very delightfully when it says: "... It might seem paradoxical observation, that had British rule been inefficient, unprogressive, or malevolent, the present movement against it could hardly as yet have arisen .... Thus the achievements of the British raj have themselves created the condition whereby many Indians hope it will be possible to supersede it altogether ..." and adds: "Unquestionably, nationalist sentiment has spread far and deep throughout the whole structure of Indian society, and is capable of stimulating an enthusiasm which cannot but evoke respect." In "The Indian Riddle" Mr. Coatman observes: "Now, a study of the history of British India will leave no doubt in the mind of any competent observer that

the foundations of the Indian nationalist movement are deep and genuine, that the movement itself is of a type which we have encountered before in our Imperial history, and that it will ultimately achieve its aim which is the establishment of an autonomous government . . . . The trouble with the present ordinances is that they solve no problem. They cannot even hold the present position stable . . . . Beneath the calm produced by the ordinances, passions are held in leash, and moderates, already handicapped by their moderation, are feeling that whatever influence they may have possessed at one time is rapidly dwindling to vanishing point." And again "Now, we have got to face the fact quite frankly that unless there is some form of real responsible government in which Indians can control their own internal affairs, conditions like the present will always recur and at some date, which is perhaps not far off in the future, will become endemic". This is an entirely correct but not a complete reading of the situation, for the grant of responsible Government will not in itself prevent recurrence of the conditions which according to Mr. Coatman, in the not distant future, will become endemic. The basic cause of those conditions is not only the absence of fully responsible Government but the presence of a permanent and alarmingly widespread economic depression. Responsible Government can, at best, tackle the problem with greater energy and directness than a benevolent autocracy suffering from inherent disadvantages, but not all responsible Governments are effectively responsible or energetic in promoting the interests of those whom they repre-

sent, and whether responsible Government in India promotes the interests of the masses, or results in the creation of a dangerous oligarchy, ruthlessly advancing its own purposes, remains to be seen. It is for this reason that the administrations of Lord Willingdon during the next two years and of his successors assume transcendent importance.

Whether lawlessness and disorder are to be epidemic or endemic will depend on the solution or otherwise of certain vital economic problems. Take the problem of the Indian village where full 80 per cent of India lives in poverty, and rural contentment assumes an importance above all the constitutional clamour. The provincial Banking Committees' reports show more than 80 per cent of peasant population in perpetual debt, the debt amounting to more than 800 crores of rupees and interest burden four times the revenue charge. Over large tracts the peasant landholder simply does not exist. The village population, in some of the big provinces, is composed largely of tenants and agricultural labour. The zamindar is often interested only in rent collection; land improvement is generally no concern of his; the question of labour amelioration hardly occurs to him. The Permanent Settlement has not fulfilled the expectations, held at its introduction, of building up a permanent interest in land improvement, while the loyalty the measure was expected to generate is, because of the land and labour situation, more than counterbalanced by the discontent it breeds.

Even where the Rayatwari System prevails land is more often than not owned by the town-



dweller, and the absentee landlord, squeezing what he can out of the land, keeps the villager on the margin of barest existence. And what is the result? Professor Spykman, the holder of the Chair of Political Science at the Yale University, writing to Mr. F. W. Wilson, the late Editor of the "Pioneer" of Allahabad and the "Indian Daily Mail" of Bombay, said: "To put it bluntly I give the Government of India whether Indian or British, not more than ten years to choose between agrarian reform and agrarian revolution. From the non-payment of taxes to the non-payment of land rent is a small step. Agrarian reform, in order to be a success, must be far-reaching, and much more fundamental even than the reforms in Roumania. A change in the system of landholding and the creation of small peasant proprietors is not enough. That would at best be a prop for one generation of about fifteen years. Unless the Government in power has the courage to tackle, at the same time, the Hindu law of inheritance, and the system of rural education, no permanent results can be expected."

During the next ten years the greatest task before Government will therefore be to effectuate a radical reform in the land system. Lord Willingdon had to deal with a similar situation, though in much milder form, in Bombay and Madras. We have seen his relief works for the debt-harassed peasantry, his measures of state-aid during famines, his endeavours to ease the clutches of the money-lender by fostering rapid development of co-operative movement, generous advancement of irrigation and similar other

measures. Adequate at the time, to-day these measures are totally insufficient. The mildest steps essential in the immediate future will have to be a dozen times more drastic. It will be necessary, by stringent legal provisions against usury, to unloosen the stranglehold of the money-lender, reduce the rate of interest by law to a low level, keep the debtor safe against the piracies of the Marwari by measures similar to, but stronger than those embodied in the Money-lenders Bills now before the Madras and other Councils, and if these measures are indicative of the general future policy, the regime of Lord Willingdon will go down the corridors of history as one which, by the stringent handling of the most fundamental Indian problem, saved the country from an impending chaos of an unparalleled magnitude and placed it on the high-roads of regeneration.

To get the villagers in live touch with the world-forces, to raise their living standard and to bring them in contact with modern sanitation, scientific thought and approach of life, general rural education will be an important effective action. It will be the corner-stone of healthy and contented countryside, and the increase in the demand for goods of modern manufacture through the infusion of a higher standard of life will benefit the Empire industrial development as nothing else can. Though mathematical calculations are often misleading, it has been said by those competent to speak on the subject that amelioration of the peasantry from indebtedness, and improvement in their crops, will, without any extraordinary difficulty, increase the spending power of the

peasant fourfold; with such progress in a population of over 30 crores depending on soil, the effect on the idle factories in India and the Empire and the potential industries of India can well be imagined.

For the prevention of frequent popular upsurge, a radical change in the land system, especially in Zamindari provinces is considered absolutely essential; to secure compulsory land improvement and to safeguard the interests of tenants, drastic legal measures will have to be resorted to. To provide for the education of village school population, sanitary essentials of tenants, sickness requirements for land labourers, insurance against illness, accidents, deaths etc., the needs of the widows and children of tenants radical laws will have to be passed in the near future. Government perform some of these social functions on a comparatively smaller scale so far. Lord Willingdon himself sanctioned more than one scheme for these purposes. The resources of neither the Provincial nor the Central Governments will be able to cope with the present enlarged requirements, and heavy taxation on money-lenders and landlords for directly financing these activities would perhaps seem undesirable. Considerations of political expediency require the avoidance of any direct attack on these classes, and as such the most feasible alternative seems to be to secure legislative enactment for compulsory provision by the zamindars and other employers of land labour of essential social services. It is not necessary here to dilate on the details of land reform. There is no question that the tenancy laws

will have materially to be altered and liberalised and the landlords will have to be made to understand their responsibilities as leaders of rural India.

The outstanding feature of Lord Irwin's Vice-royalty was not the Congress movement, but the earlier and more dangerous wave of workers' strikes, a wave which is likely to break out again at any time with greater ferocity despite the various conciliatory acts passed by different provinces. Industrial regeneration of the country cannot be based on such a fragile foundation, and yet industrial development is admittedly absolutely essential for national prosperity. Education, specially of the secondary and higher type, has far outstripped national industry; the result is appalling unemployment among the educated, filling in the ranks of Congress civil resisters and the more dangerous anarchists. What is the remedy? We can very well imagine what the future Legislatures will do. Though the rural electorate under the new constitution is well balanced against domination of city industrialists, it will not be able to resist the influence of merchant princes and industrial magnates and totally to prevent the raising of the modern Chinese walls of protective tariff as high as they can reach. Strange though it may seem, it is nevertheless a fact that the eleven demands formulated on behalf of the Congress represent the spirit of the future city electorate and reflect the views of a far wider public opinion than is confined to the official Congress leadership. The proposal for the total exclusion of all foreign cloth, injurious according to competent opinion to the great mass

of consumers, represents the most influential industrial opinion of the land ; the total reservation of coastal shipping is the genuine demand of those who will considerably influence, if not effectually control the future Legislatures. And these are typical of the trend of opinion among the future arbiters of India's destiny. How the future administrator will be able to meet these ambitions and also mind the interests of the primary producer and the general consumer, who in the last analysis bear the burden of all protection, will be the measure of wise administration ; the reconciliation of these conflicting interests will be the measure of statesmanship. And no period of Indian Viceroyalty made a greater demand on this qualification as would be demanded during the next few years.

Greater than industrial development and protective measures is the problem of industrial proletariat, whose condition to-day seems wholly inconsistent with the claims of India's moral mission to the world. Ahmedabad, Bombay, Sholapur and Calcutta slums can hold their own against any in the world. In fact, Ahmedabad may well claim to be the champion slumland of the world, and though the influence of Mahatma Gandhi has kept the situation well under control, no lasting policy can depend on a single individual for continuance of the peaceful atmosphere. Labouring classes in the rest of India are getting impatient, struggling and fighting ; strikes and deadlocks are becoming a matter of daily occurrence. They are getting far past the morally justifiable methods of the Congress. They have had the usual

rehearsals that precede a general strike and revolution.

Lord Willingdon has had to deal with labour troubles in Bombay and Madras. His public utterances breathe the spirit of generous labour uplift, and more than once he has gone ahead of the proclaimed leaders of Indian opinion on this issue. During the bitter strike of the Buckingham Mills in Madras, when the Hindu and Muslim workers combined in riotous assaults on the loyal Adi-Dravids, Lord Willingdon, sending out a resounding call to the Presidency to mobilise general opinion for the amelioration of the mill workers, contrasted the attitude of the Indian mill-owner in complaining against the treatment of Indian labour abroad, with the treatment of labour at home. Those memorable words are worth quoting : "But I want in all seriousness to ask two questions of the hon. members (of the Legislative Council) in order to put the position as I can see it clearly before their minds. Is it altogether honest on our part to insist on these regulations for our labourers from other (South African, etc.) Governments unless we are determined to secure equally favourable conditions for all workers in our own provinces ? Can we with any justice demand that fair and equal treatment which we all agree should be given to Indians in other parts of the Empire, if we do not put our own house in order and insist on securing similar treatment for all our citizens within our borders ? I am speaking frankly, for I feel very strongly that conditions of labour in parts of our Province are so bad that they demand urgent and

drastic remedy. Government have endeavoured in the past, and will continue to endeavour in the future to improve the prospects in life for these poor people, but to ensure complete success we require the whole force of public opinion behind us. I therefore appeal to every hon. member of this Council for the credit of our Presidency, I go further and say for the sake of humanity, to rouse that public opinion in order that we may all ensure that every employer of labour shall be forced to undertake his full responsibility for the fair treatment and well-being of all his workers, and that the labourer shall secure all those advantages at home which we have been so eagerly working to secure for him when he leaves his country to work for employers overseas." With a record of such zealous championship of workers and with the existence of extreme gravity in the situation among the proletariat, the next few years may see further introduction of labour laws, not always to the taste of the capitalist, and on the strength of rural, labour and Depressed Class representatives will depend how far Lord Willingdon and his successors will succeed in this programme. With a situation of the type described above, even representatives of the town-capitalism may further the cause of the slum-dwellers. Only by such a far-sighted policy will the future of industrial progress be ensured.

The third great problem, the rising inter-communal conflict, it has been said, is due to the policy of *divide et impereta*. This is simply incorrect for it would be impossible for any ruler to effect such sharp conflicts as exist to-day without a basic influence

working in the direction. Indian inter-communal conflict, it is truly held, is founded on strong historical traditions, and have an equally strong social background. It was no 'sun-dried' bureaucrat who composed those songs, so popular in Maharashtra and so lustily sung, emitting hatred and violence against Muslims. Surely it was not the 'sun-dried' bureaucrat who occupied political platforms of extremist India to preach the doctrine of the re-establishment of Brahmin supremacy. The worst enemies of the Government cannot say that the Mahasabha is a Government-inspired organisation, for the foremost leaders of the movement were, only a few years ago, the staunchest nationalists, and Tilakites to boot. The Brahmin-non-Brahmin troubles also have their roots in the long story of justice denied, wrongs perpetrated, hardships inflicted. Out of these arise the present reactions of distrust and suspicion. It was not long ago that the non-Brahmin students suffered at the hands of Brahmin teachers, the Brahmin village dignitaries insulted and humbled the non-Brahmin villagers, tyrannised over them. The Brahmins still continue to dominate the learned professions and Government services and hold the steadily challenged monopoly of "cooshy" jobs. Undoubtedly they possess the intellectual calibre to lead in the learned professions, but that very monopoly of intellectual attainment is conversely the result of frustrated intellectual life of the non-Brahmin for centuries past. The time seems not far distant when the Depressed Classes, just rising out of their slumber, will, unless better influence prevail, wreak vengeance for the



age-long slavery to which the Brahmin oligarchy subjected them and from which Brahmin reformers, among others, are to-day liberating them.

The Hindu-Muslim differences like the Brahmin-non-Brahmin discord have a strong economic foundation. The general condition of the Muslims, broadly speaking, is, lower than that of the average Hindu which is bad enough in all conscience. Owing to the low standard of education, in spite of the special preference, the Muslims do not hold, proportionate to their population, the same number of Government and other secure posts as the Hindus. In the learned professions they are hardly represented. More, the entire business of money-lenders and all commercial key positions are controlled by the Hindus. Even in the distant Peshawar the merchants and money-lenders are predominantly Hindus. Further, as landholders the Hindus dominate the situation. In Malabar, Kashmir, Alwar, large parts of Bengal, Assam, and United Provinces, the landlords generally, are Hindus and the Muslims contribute more than their quota of tenants. The profit-making positions are thus in the grip of the Hindus, the sweat-producing occupations in the unenviable command of the Muslims. Nothing but historical and social accidents are responsible for this but then it constitutes the basis of the communal disharmony.

Ignoring hard, incontestable facts cannot carry one to solution of difficulties and only when they are admitted that a true and scientific realignment of interests will be effected. The present division on communal lines according to Mr. Wilson will pass away

with the freer play of economic forces, and with this freedom of economic forces he says, "The present liberal-minded, or even Congress-inclined Bombay merchant will soon find himself allied with the Muslim landowner of the United Provinces. The wealthy merchants of Gujerat, who are now supporting and financing the Congress, will soon discover affinities with the minor rajas and zamindars. The Punjab peasant will find that his lot is not far different from the Hindu ryot in Bihar. Rural interests everywhere will unite regardless of religious differences. Economics and economic theories will hold the field, or when the property and vested interests are attacked it will be found that belief in the Vedas or in the Koran will not prove handicaps to united self-defence . . . . Social and economic reform will breed much divine discontent, and such discontent cannot be at the same time the prayer of bigoted pundits and fanatical mullahs". The same author puts the matter more tersely, though somewhat indirectly, when referring to the millowners who supported the Congress civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes, he said: "Perhaps these men think that 'have-nots' of India will in their moment of triumph differentiate between the zamindars of Bihar and the millowners of Ahmedabad. I am certain they are making a tremendous mistake."

The new realignment brought about by the freer play of economic forces will help considerably in forwarding the extensive land reform which will undoubtedly be the next move of wise rulership. It will also help in effecting an extensive improve-

ment of prevailing labour condition. Above all, it will solve the perplexing problem of inter-communal jealousy. The labour legislation enacted by the Central and some of the Provincial Governments during the past three years have strengthened the foundations for the essentials of a change in inter-communal relationship. The new realignment of forces under wise and reasonable leadership will also mean the weakening of communalism, which will come to be viewed in a new light, and cannot be utilised as a springboard for political climbers.

In his well-informed and balanced book "India in Transition" His Highness the Aga Khan shows how temple-entry for the Depressed Classes cannot remove their basic economic problem. The fact that the sentimental and conscientious grievances of the Depressed Classes are concentrated upon to-day make the observations of His Highness the Aga Khan worthy of special notice ; "In every part of the world we find a 'submerged' class. In India so widespread is the poverty of the people that judged by Western standards, an overwhelming majority, and not the outcastes alone, can be described as depressed or submerged. Long-familiarity with this all-pervading poverty, however, leads to the application of these terms on basis not of poverty, but of membership of the 'untouchable' communities. Henceforth, if the task of national improvement and consolidation is to be taken in hand, we must give a wider meaning to the description of 'depressed' than that of mere position of a member of inferior sections in relation to the Hindu caste system. A mere hypothesis will make

this point clear. We will assume that a great and sudden movement toward social justice (this prophetic observation is made twelve years before the present movement was conceived) led all the Brahman and other castes of Hindu society to receive the outcastes as brothers in faith, and to accept their companionship at gala dinners throughout the land. What would be the position of these unfortunate people on the following day? No doubt the mere fact of acceptance as the social and spiritual equals of higher-caste men would be a general widening of national sympathy. Yet in the absence of far-reaching economic improvement, the actual position and standard of life of these unfortunate classes would remain very much what it is at present. The general mass would not be better off, though here and there the door of opportunity to rise might be opened, as for instance, in the occasional marriage of girls to men of the higher castes." A general acceptance of the above scientifically correct viewpoint is the only solution for communalism run mad, and an enlightened administration will utilise the method of economic classification as a counter-remedy to communalism which will demand the most serious consideration of administrative stewardship during the next decade. A Viceroy it has been said, usually spends his first two years in mastering his work, his next two years in redressing the errors of his administration of the previous two years, and the last year in a constructive endeavour. This may be a somewhat exaggerated view but it is true that Lord Willingdon was free from the obvious handicaps of a new comer, for he entered the Vice-

royalty with full eleven years of Indian experience, and, as such, had not to spend any time in mastering his work and correcting the errors of ignorance. From the day he entered Delhi it was a period of constructive statesmanship. As such the achievements of this Viceroyalty have a large scope for surpassing previous records. The volume of legislative and other measures effected so far proves Lord Willingdon's sustained efforts to get to grips with the major political, economic and social problems mentioned in this chapter.

We have tried in this chapter to forecast the development of Indian situation, and its interpretation has led us to the conclusion that the best interests of imperial security and national prosperity require radical reform, unwelcome to some and very bitter to others, but which are unavoidable in the situation to-day. British statesmanship has learned a great deal in the course of its long imperial history. It is inconceivable that the mistakes of Lord North will ever be repeated, it is difficult to believe that Ireland will be reacted in India. British statesmen have learned in the hard school of experience the wisdom of moderation and compromise, advance and consolidation. The record of Lord Willingdon's administration in Bombay, Madras and Delhi shows him to be the living embodiment of that spirit of long-sighted statesmanship. His liberalism will continue to stand above the clamour of selfish imperialism and foolish flag-wagging, his knowledge of Indian requirements will enable him to bring on the common platform of co-operation the best brains of

the country and harness them for the well-being of the people and happiness of the Empire.

## LADY WILLINGDON

**A**T its first session under the Presidency of Lord Willingdon, the Chamber of Princes passed a resolution welcoming the new Viceroy; all the eminent members of the Princely Order spoke eulogistically of his many attainments, abilities, and achievements; their admiration for Lady Willingdon, however, surpassed all they could say about the Viceroy, and, in all conscience, they had said a great many good things about him. Lord Willingdon made a short reply. That short reply contained one observation, which was no phrase-mongering, about Lady Willingdon, for he said: "And in this connection perhaps I may be allowed to say that from long experience I endorse every word that Your Highnesses have said with regard to Her Excellency, my wife, and I am delighted to feel that Your Highnesses, like myself have got such a very clear realisation of her many admirable and diverse qualities." It is not possible to quote the high tributes Their Highnesses paid to Her Excellency, they can well be imagined. What is significant is that when Lord Willingdon



*Her Excellency Lady Willingdon  
photographed during her visit to  
Rambhau in 1933*





endorses every word of what the speakers said regarding Lady Willingdon, it means much more than is usually understood on such occasions ; and yet the endorsement could have been made by any impartial critic of the life-activities of Lady Willingdon in India.

The history of India contains some inspiring tales of the power behind the throne exercised by her great and good daughters. It contains authentic records of women of transcendent valour, high ambition, rousing patriotism, saintly character, who left an inerasable stamp of their power and influence on the life of the people who came under their sway. There is the story of a queen without whose previous consent the ruler executed no administrative decision ; another, Romeo of a prince, has left for his queen a monument of unsurpassed splendour which has become the pilgrimage of the whole country and the Mecca of globe-trotters ; there was Chand Bibi who inspired her army to a gallant defence of her realm and died fighting while the enemy was still kept at bay ; there was the Rani of Jhansi whose valiant struggle could rouse nothing but admiration and praise from her enemies.

The systematised, machine-like government installed in power to-day can hardly permit of repetition of such episodes in modern times. The wives of provincial Governors and Viceroy's are afforded scant scope for a glaring display of ability and their activities are confined to the background of the official world where they engage themselves in the social functions usually associated with their

position. More active of recent years, they lead, some of them, in the social uplift movements like child welfare, maternity improvement and so on, but even in this field not all have distinguished themselves for energy and dynamic pushfulness ; others have dazzled the circle they move in by the excellence of their social attainments, and a few have done better through social intercourse with Indian women of the highest strata and studying their environment and outlook ; some again have taken part in ceremonial social functions inevitable from Government House, delivered the kinds of speeches usual on these occasions. A few have earned a lasting fame in the Indian community for their conspicuous national services, and among these the name of Lady Willingdon will stand out with a prominence and distinction far above the average and unsurpassed, or even unequalled, by any of her predecessors.

In the course of this book we have had occasion to refer to the many achievements of Lady Willingdon in Bombay. Her work in the Western Presidency was not merely of the nature usually associated with the activities of the consorts of provincial Governors ; it was intimately connected with the most important national services of which unfortunately there can be no official record. Extensive references were however made to that work in the Legislative Council on the eve of Lord Willingdon's retirement from the Presidency, and of the numerous appreciations we shall, to begin with, quote the one from Government's staunch opponent, the Hon. Mr. G. K. Parekh. "If I refer to Your Excellency's work it would be improper for me

to forget the work of Her Excellency" said Mr. Parekh in the Legislative Council, "Her Excellency's work was the most splendid. There was nothing that could be equal to it and we cannot conceive of anything that could be superior to it. She helped the Presidency in two ways. The first was to bring together the two communities which unfortunately from some reason or other have shown a certain amount of aloofness in their relations. Both of you tried your best to narrow this gulf of aloofness between the two communities and to make them co-operate in every good and useful work, and to this work Her Excellency Lady Willingdon has given the greatest contribution . . . . Within 20 days after the War was declared she started clubs, societies, and institutions for helping in the War. She associated with the work the more respectable section of the European community and every section of the Indian community. She made them feel what their duty was and she led them. The share of the Presidency in the contributions attained through her efforts was not a small one. Ninety lakhs of rupees for the War were the result of her efforts. There was hardly any direction of work which Her Excellency omitted. There were 11 hospitals, 6 in Bombay, 2 in Karachi, 2 in Poona, 1 in Deolali, the assistance to which was the result of her efforts. Then we have had the Queen Mary Technical School for soldiers who were disabled during the War, started in order that the wounded should not be dependent upon the people, and Her Excellency very wisely devised that they should be taught certain industries

by which they would be enabled to spend the rest of their lives in comfort. But the assistance was not confined to this country, but was also extended to soldiers who were fighting for the people and the wounded outside the country. To the hospital in Alexandria, 49,000 articles of comfort were despatched from here, and in this way wherever there were the sick and the wounded, Her Excellency was ready to send such help as she could. To soldiers in the fields, she sent comforts of all kinds from tobacco, cigar, sweetmeats to clothing which would protect them from the cold, and in this way I should consider that Her Excellency's work in connection with the War was quite as high as the other work which I propose to refer to. I now refer, sir, to the immense popularity which both of you have enjoyed. I refer, sir, to the love and affection that the people of this country feel for you. Whenever there was any work or any institution for the relief of sickness and disease Her Excellency and Your Excellency were both ready to take interest in it and to try to help it as much as possible. I myself have been connected with several charitable institutions and I bear witness to the readiness with which Your Excellency notwithstanding your heavy engagements was ready to do anything to help them. Her Excellency again has earned the lasting blessings of the poor people of Bombay by her scheme of maternity hospitals which would reduce the high toll of life of infant and young women due to poverty, ignorance and want of care and attention and the difficulty of obtaining pure milk during the most critical stages of their lives.

Then Her Excellency was anxious to improve the lot of the poorer people better than what it is, to make them see that they are lodged in more sanitary buildings, to see that in big cities like Bombay the slums are removed, to see that Bombay and other places are rendered much healthier than what they are, and in every way it was the work of both Your Excellencies to see that the poorer people in any case were helped to the utmost."

Rao Bahadur V. S. Naik speaking on the same occasion said: "During Your Excellency's beneficent and illustrious regime our Presidency was particularly fortunate in having Her Excellency Lady Willingdon as Your Excellency's constant companion who by her good nature, high-mindedness, keen interest in all matters and great kindness has been an object of admiration and worship throughout the Presidency both among the rich and the poor. By her numerous beneficent and illustrious services Her Excellency has so captivated the heart of the people of this Presidency that it will take considerable time before they forget the pains of separation. Her Excellency's earnest solicitude to promote the educational and social activities amongst the ladies of this country, the kindness of her relations with them will be greatly cherished long after she leaves this Presidency."

The Hon. Sardar Dulbawa Raisingji Thakor Saheb of Kerwada said: "Before I sit down, permit me, my lord, to say about the good work of the unofficial minister of social well-being,—I mean Lady Willingdon. Under her inspiring leadership and

majestic influence the women of this Presidency have nobly done their duty towards those heroes who fought and bled for the British Empire. Under her leadership and Your Excellency's guidance the women and men of this Presidency have played their full part and discharged their civic duties creditably and gloriously."

The key-note to Lady Willingdon's activities in Bombay was struck in the observation made in the farewell address to her by the Bombay Presidency Women's Council wherein it said: "No plan concerning the amelioration of the condition of women has been presented to Your Excellency without gaining your entire co-operation."

It would require another volume of this size fully to refer to Lady Willingdon's work in India and to its appreciation by leaders of every shade of political opinion. But the passages quoted above will give the reader an idea of the immense almost unequalled services she rendered to Bombay and repeated at Madras and Delhi. The secret of her remarkable popularity lay in her intrinsic greatness, her charm of manner, her untiring enthusiasm for all welfare work, her complete freedom from that snobbishness which embitters some of the best Indian elements. She was so completely at home among Indian women and in Indian atmosphere that those in intimate contact with her never felt that among them was one who was a foreigner in the land and new to the habits, customs and manners of those with whom she worked.

On arrival in Bombay Lady Willingdon saw a

great opportunity for service and grasped it with unprecedented energy. The great social problems, the condition of women, the sorrows of starving children, the appalling death-rate among new-born babes, inspired her to high endeavour and gathered round her a band of enthusiastic, earnest-minded women from the best of families to infuse them with the spirit of service which continues to dominate to-day the many organisations she has left behind. The Bombay Presidency Women's Council, a vital force in the life of the city to-day, is entirely her creation; the extensive maternity benefit centres spread throughout the city are her creation; rescue work, so effectively carried out to-day, was unknown before Lady Willingdon applied her mind to it. The hall-mark of her dynamic personality is inerasable. In the past women were hardly ever actively engaged in such work. Social service was mostly confined to men; the few women's organisations which did exist in the Presidency lent themselves to little more than academic discussions; hardly any organisation of this type took to actual field-work. The necessary material for such work was ripe and ready. Educated women, imbued with a new spirit of service, women from the leisured classes willing to devote themselves to the up-lift of their unfortunate sisters were there, but the leadership was absent. It was Lady Willingdon who released the latent powers and mobilised them for organised action. In doing this she has shown the true genius of leadership, the genius of a type not always displayed in the past. The crowded programme of fare-



well meetings Lady Willingdon had to face on the eve of her leaving Bombay breathed no spirit of hypocritical sycophancy and servile flattery ; it reflected the true admiration of the hordes of the colleagues and followers of Lady Willingdon for her qualities of self-sacrificing enthusiasm, high-minded endeavour and abiding sympathy for the poor and the down-trodden.

The same activities, only more intense and widespread, characterised her life in Madras. The Baby Weeks organised throughout the Southern Presidency were the result there of her leadership and inspiration ; the maternity benefit centres, now so popular in Madras, were her creation ; the regenerative work among the aboriginal tribes and the Depressed Classes, conceived by others, was put into effect by Lady Willingdon. A detailed description of all those activities need not be given, nor is it necessary to quote the numerous tributes paid to her. The non-co-operation movement with its programme of social isolation and severance from official and pro-official activities only resulted in widening her scope of action among the down-trodden of society. Reports of various social institutions show that. In Madras, more perhaps than in Bombay, Lady Willingdon evinced her highest qualities of leadership and organising ability.

When the appointment of Lord Willingdon to the Viceroyalty was announced, the London *Times*, among others, doubted if the new Viceroy would, in view of his age and unsteady health, be equal to the task. It evidently did not take into account the

untiring personality of Lady Willingdon, for it may truly be said that her dynamic energy in Delhi has been a matter of amazement to all who have observed her at work ; and if age has affected Lord Willingdon the deficiency is easily made up by his distinguished wife who through all the long viceregal tours took an over shadowing part in social and ceremonial activities during the last three years. Mr. Montagu was amazed at Lady Willingdon's extraordinary energy, but forgot that the blood of the builder of the Nile Dam was running through her veins. That spirit of adventure and power of organisation is in her very-being, the charms of leadership are in her making. To-day Lady Willingdon is as active as, perhaps more so than, twenty years ago. We have only to see the Viceregal programmes during the tours to realise that while the Viceroy is busy granting interviews to Indian leaders, officials and businessmen, is in addition engaged in the more taxing duties of attending public ceremonial functions.

With the subsidence of political unrest to-day and the greater flow of national energy into constructive work Lady Willingdon will now be more busy than in the past three years, for the many problems left behind in the wake of political restlessness will make a heavy draft on her spirit of service. The talents of the many Congress enthusiasts will have to be harnessed for constructive action, the idealism of those to-day in the grip of despair will have to be turned to hopeful paths. In this India may well depend on Lady Willingdon, for by nature and temperament she can never allow opportunities to

be wasted.

Behind the Viceregal throne to-day is the powerful personality of Lady Willingdon. The world will perhaps never know to what extent she has influenced Indian history during the past two years; the world will perhaps never fully realise the contribution she has made towards building goodwill and healing the wounds of misunderstanding. It requires no great imagination, however, to realise that in this age of machine-like government, in this age of routine, red-tapism and bureaucracy, she has succeeded in transcending the limitations of her sex, and wields an influence, rare in these days, and far surpassing any ever exercised by her predecessors. Lord Willingdon's frequent acknowledgment is proof positive of this unique accomplishment.

It is a man-dominated world we live in, for despite the liberating and equalising influences operating for the last two hundred years, the world is still far from the day of equal opportunity for men and women in all walks of life. To the orthodox it looks almost inconceivable that a great woman can be sent out as a ruler of a great province in the colonial Empire of Great Britain; it looks still more inconceivable that a woman can be placed officially at the head of a mighty nation, seething with unrest like India. Man is still suffering from an age-long superiority complex in relation to woman; she is not trusted with the top responsibility, at least in the administrative posts, and has to be content with playing a secondary rôle. Under a more just and fair social order Lady Willingdon might have

been at the head of a great province or even at the head of this country. But whether she is at the head or not, it is a fact that her abilities are to-day in the service of the Indo-British Commonwealth, as has rarely been the case in its history. The romance of the power she directs while in Simla and Delhi or on tour will not be realised by the outside world. Perhaps Lady Willingdon herself might some day reveal it, and then it might very easily be the equal of any narrated in the pre-British history of India, it might perhaps surpass them all.

## LORD RATENDONE : AN APPRECIATION

(By Prof. V. G. RAO, B.A., LL.B., Bar-at-Law, Formerly  
Tutor to Lord Ratendone.)

I have had the privilege of an intimate association with Lord Ratendone when his distinguished father was Governor of the Bombay Presidency and I can truly say that he combined in himself all the distinguishing qualities of an English youth. Apart from his keen interest in a bewildering variety of subjects which would indeed be an object lesson to Indian students, he has a charm of personality and polish of courtesy which make it such a delight to be in his company. He combines in himself the tact, ability and courage of his father and winsome, charming manner of his mother. His interest in life ranges from games of all kinds and military, naval and aerial exploits to serious study of a variety of subjects including the dry subject of finance and practical business. Lord Ratendone has not distinguished himself in politics so far but it would not be surprising if after a successful city life he enters

politics with zest and carries everything before him. A successful life is assured to him by his inherent abilities, but what is greater than a successful life is the fragrance of goodwill and kindliness he spreads in the atmosphere in which he moves. It is born of a nature, good and true, that brings to him an even widening circle of friends and admirers which would be an envy for many a youth of his age. The memory of his many qualities will ever remain fresh in my mind and I can hold him up as an example for the Indian student to emulate.



